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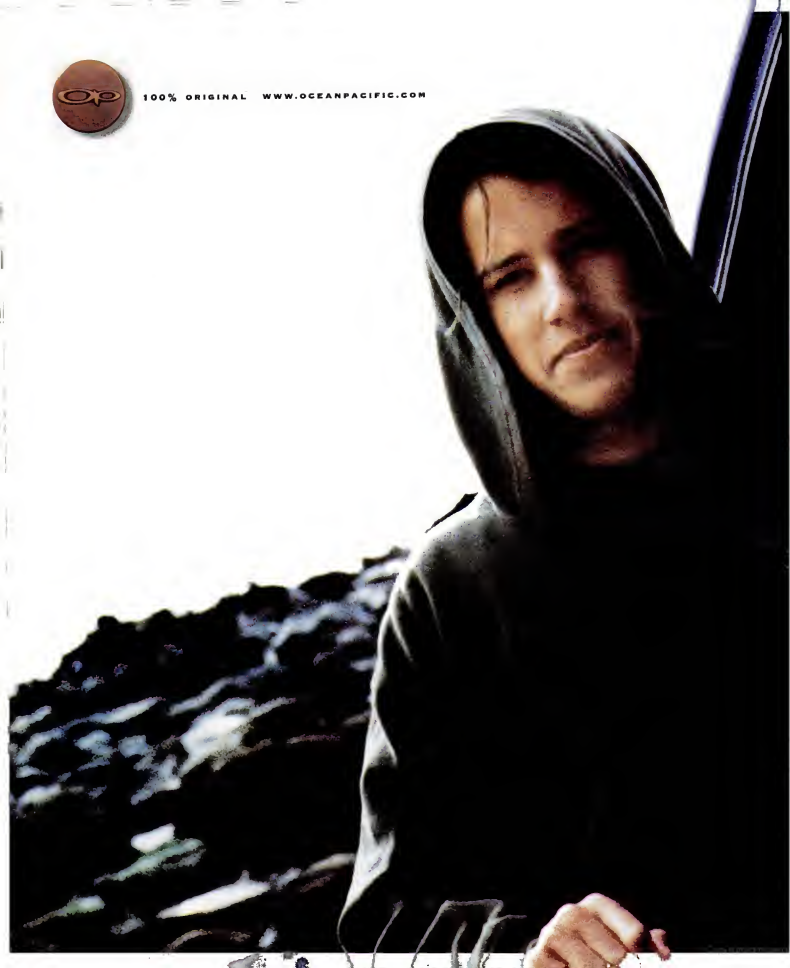
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TIES

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THIS MONTH

6/1 - Plan for a cool summer with our OP Summer Entertainment Guide. We'll tell you where to go and what to do from June through August.

6/15 - Video interview with GWAR. See Spin.com fondle Oderus Urungus's crotch puppet, "Pat!"

Second week of June - Astralwerks and Virgin present a very special Chemical Brothers event - check Upcoming for details.

6/21 - Oooh, that Robbie Williams is so chic and smarmy! Log on to hear our audio interview with the boy-band survivor turned laddish hottie.

SUMMER TOURS

Reviews and sounds from Warped Tour, Ozzfest, Tibetan Freedom, and Glastonbury.

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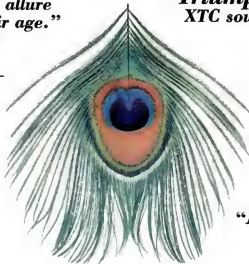
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than alt kids half their age.”*

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“A buoyant,
beautiful album”
NEWSWEEK

“Phenomenal!
A contender for
album of the
decade.”

LAUNCH

“Astoundingly oblique
and original.”

INTERVIEW

“A sumptuous banquet of symphonic and acoustic pop.”

USA TODAY



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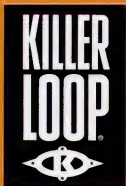
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Volume 15 / Number 7 / July 1999

07.99

ON THE COVER:

Axl Rose, photographed in December 1987.

FEATURES

P.88 JUST A LITTLE PATIENCE

He wore kilt. He threw chairs at models. He controlled the souls of house pets. As the intemperate, angry, erratic leader of Guns N' Roses, Axl Rose quickly became among the most celebrated rock figures of the last decade. But at the height of his career he disappeared, last seen getting arrested for firearm possession in Phoenix. Today, amid swirling rumors surrounding his fiercely guarded new album, *Spin* remembers why Axl rocks. BY MARC SPITZ

P.94 BACK TO THE LAB

Rave icons the Chemical Brothers transcend big beats to create the quietly powerful *Surrender*. Still no messy emotions, though. BY SIMON REYNOLDS

P.100 THE WONDER TWINS

Double your pleasure. Double your fun. Ja-pop-nese action figures Cibo Matto keep breaking the mold with their second LP, *Stereotype A*. BY CHRIS MORRIS

P.104 SUMMER MUSIC GUIDE 1999

Spin's international guide to this summer's hard-rockin', mud-slidin' sites for

large-scale musical amusement. It's like a PalmPilot of summer fun, only it's made of paper and ink. BY DAVID J. PRINCE

P.108 THE KINGS OF SCRAMBLE

Despite some alarming new developments—they sing in tune, play in time, and (don't tell anyone) they've practiced—the far-flung members of Pavement return with a distinctly Pavement-sounding record. And some new sports metaphors. BY PRITTY KRAMORILL

P.112 CHOICE CUTS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LIZ JOHNSON RATTEN

P.118 GRAZING AT THE SERVER FARM

Electronic dismemberment! Ball pythons! Guys wearing baseball hats backward! The air smells vaguely of pizza at the Big Bangg, a videogame extravaganza where, for one very long weekend, 150 people invade a hotel to play Quake for 36 hours straight. BY DENNIS CRIS

Styles council: MCs Ryu and
Takbir Bashir of Styles of Beyond.
Photograph by Jeff Minton.

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Superhero fast.



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Drive in: Cibo Matto's Miho Hatori and Yuka Honda roll deep.
Photograph by Jelle Wugenaar.

COLUMNS

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P.39 NOISE

Missy Elliott returns with tight hooks and the realities of living in *Da Real World*. **BY JAMES PATRICK HERMAN**
BACKSTAGE PASS: B.I.G. night to remember; Jennifer Lopez's bumpin' new release; the death of Ginger Spice. **BY JAMES PATRICK HERMAN**
INCOMING: Now expanded! Styles of Beyond; Delgados; and six new artists you need to know about.
PLUS: Another loose end in the Biggie shooting case; Godsmack; Dr. Sharon, acupuncturist to the rock stars; Kid Rock on *Politically Incorrect*; remarketing those early '90s alternative greats; Insane Clown Posse; CD shopping on the Web just got more direct; and more.

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and prison rapes: the magnetic pleasures of *Oz*; are Canadians funnier than Americans (or just more moronic)?; Grand Theft Auto: London 1969; transformer fashion; MTV's wool world: *Sif & Oily*.

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SHREDDED: Chir: Eightball & M.J.G.; the Pope; Kula Shaker; Sheila Chandra; Gentle Waves; Montgomery Gentry; Common Rider; Linda Perry; Lee Hazlewood; Cardigans; Herbeliser; Funky Porcini; Atari Teenage Riot; the Donnas; and more. **BY JOSHUA CLOVER**
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On a mission for "Jane." **BY SEAN LANDERS**



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CONTRIBUTORS

MARC SPITZ

"Just a Little Patience," page 80

Quote: "Writing this story was like *Apocalypse Now*. I was Martin Sheen and Ad was Marlon Brando and I was sailing down the river to find him."

Day Job: Assistant Editor at Spin.com

Currently: Wrote and produced the play, *...Worry, Baby*, now running in New York City



JOSH KUN

"Styles of Beyond," page 54

Quote: "Styles of Beyond are from the San Fernando Valley, so I told them I'd recently seen a great rerun of *CHiPs* called 'Valley Go Home' about fights between surfers and guys from the Valley. Bashir and Ryu said they were going to hunt that down and sample it."

Has Written for: *Village Voice*, *Rolling Stone*, *Salon*

Main Gig: Writes the "Frequencies" column for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*



GREG MILNER

"Assembly Line," page 50

Quote: "Chris Cornell, Nine Inch Nails, Stone Temple Pilots, and the Chili Peppers are engaged in a Sisyphean pursuit. They push 'the Rock' up the hill, and then they either screw up their lives somehow or just take years and years to make another record, and the rock comes tumbling down the hill, and they have to start all over."

Has Written for: *Village Voice*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Replication News*

Day Job: Spin Research Editor



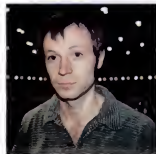
DENNIS CASS

"Grazing at the Server Farm," page 118

Quote: "I spent most of my time watching people. I tried to play, but it was really embarrassing. I'd get killed and from across the room somebody would yell, 'Suck it, bitch!'"

Has Written for: *Harper's*, *Minneapolis City Pages*

Personal Tidbit: Went to high school with Ally McBeal's Lucy Liu, who taught him how to whack ketchup effortlessly from the bottle



JASON SCHMIDT

"Lost in Oz," page 68

Quote: "It was a very realistic prison set in lower Manhattan. It had the desired effect of making me want to get out of there immediately."

Has Shot for: *New York Times Magazine*, *Nest*, *Martha Stewart Living*
Story-of-Life Detail: When being an architect didn't pan out, he picked up a camera





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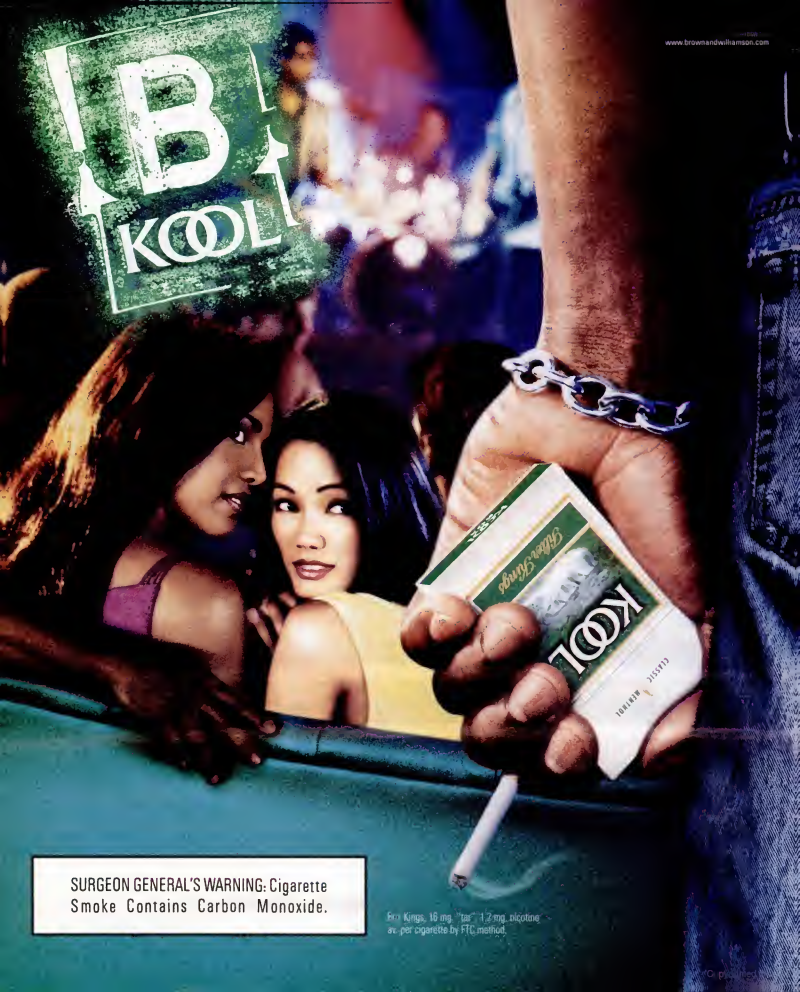
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Dear Alanis, We Were Together in a Very Tumultuous Period in My Life

Your article on Alanis is good, but you could have left out the part about her struggle with eating disorders. There are some things best left unknown. Now every time I hear her name or listen to her music, I think about how she was anorexic or bulimic. It doesn't have anything to do with her music, so why mention it?

Sara Shevchik
Warrington, Pennsylvania

Not only is Alanis a bad singer, the only reason she is a star is because of a boring, stupid song called "Ironic," which actually wrongly defines the word ironic. But I am even more depressed to see the words "Viva Rock Stars!" under her face. Alanis is not a rock star! Rock is a genre slowly slipping away from mainstream recognition and Alanis is definitely not part of it!

Evan Teitelbaum
New York, New York

Thanks for putting Alanis Morissette on the cover. She is the best. I am her No. 1 fan and always will be. U should put her on every cover. I love reading about her and try to get every single detail on her. U should make a whole magazine on her. She totally rules.

Joanna Kokos
Whitestone, New York

For Those Who Write About Those About To Rock, We Salute You
Joshua Clover's brilliant preface to "Viva Rock Stars" [April] gets me excited about

rock'n'roll. Period. His terse and historically cogent rendering of stardom and its importance to a North American concept of heroism is insightful, enlightening, and simply a pleasure to read. Rock music—of any ilk—and its heroes clearly hold a distinctive, necessary place in a culture changing at the speed of light.

Simone Stock
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I found "Viva Rock Stars" to be an interesting look into rock stardom. As I read the article, I noticed some things. First, Manly Manson may be a "rock star" now, but I think what the man projected pre-Mechanical Animals represented the idea of being a pure rock star much better. Now, the band—especially Brian himself—is just another common household product. Second, Jonathan Davis is definitely a genius rock star. Besides spawning the popularity of bands such as the Deftones and Limp Bizkit, Korn give people something to listen to that is actually stimulating. And third, in the "Answer Me" section of the feature, I couldn't help notice how Dave Wyndorf of Monster Magnet tried too hard to come off as how people like to envision the rebellious rock star—and that's just too much "Too Muchness" for me.

Leah Hadfield
Norman, Oklahoma

Definitely Not Beauty, Eh?
In response to the band Definitely Maybe [The Great Pretenders, "April": I love Oasis. I'm probably one of the biggest Oasis fans, but it makes me sick to see losers like these guys act like Oasis. Not

one person on the face of this earth can compare to Oasis. Comparing Definitely Maybe bandmember Adrian Elia to Liam Gallagher is totally mad! No one could ever be like him. I'm pretty sure I am not alone in wanting to find the person who wrote that article and smack some sense into him. Otherwise, I love you all at Spin, and have a nice day.

Ters Turk
San Mateo, California

Me: "Dear God, if you really exist, please, please create an article about a Canadian Oasis tribute band for this poor lonely Canadian Oasis-tribute-band-loving boy! And I could really use an electric toothbrush, too. Amen."

God: "Your prayers have been answered, my son! Check out the new issue of Spin—the one with Alanis on the cover for the billionth time—and enjoy your toothbrush! I have spoken."

Me: "Oh. Well. I was just kidding about the article. Thanks for the toothbrush though. God. It's pretty neat."
God: "Ain't no thing. Outie 5,000!!!"
Juan Manuel Fanjo
Buffalo, New York

Flipping the Free Bird

I am Artimus Pyle's son and, as a result, I have had to listen to the quarrels among the remaining members of Lynyrd Skynyrd ["The Encore From Hell," April] my entire life. I respect the true Lynyrd Skynyrd that existed until 1977. Their current slate of new songs, which sound like bad copies of the old ones, are sad. These losers spend so much of what they make on their

SPIN.COM

Appetite for Deconstruction Rat your hair, expose the tats, zip up the stone wash, complain about Reaganomics, and then read this month's cover story on Guns N' Roses, in which Spin.com's Marc Spitz takes you down to the Paradise City, where the grass is green and the girls are...oh, you know. Once sorted, Sweet Child o' Mine, log on to Spin.com June 15 for the complete interviews with Duff McKagan, Nikki Sixx, Bret Michaels, Lars Ulrich—and more from the jungle, baby.

Herman Melville's Progeny

Spin.com spoke with pigeonhole-less techno/rock DJ/producer/Alan Lomax wannabe/Svengali Moby about his music a-hi, his vegan lifestyle, and his ancestor, Herman Melville—and we got the transcript to prove it. After you've checked the lead review of *Play*, his latest CD (p. 125), haul your Captain Ahab buns over to Spin.com on June 11 and read our whale of an interview.

Summer (Music Guide) Lovin' / Had Me a Blast / Summer (Music Guide) Lovin' / Thought It Would

Last Want to know which music tests the Pink Ladies and the T-Birds are going to this summer? Read Spin's Summer Music Guide (p.104), then surf over to Spin.com's continually updated Web version with audio, video, and other interactive elements to get you through the dog days. As for our summer lovin', I guess it was just one of those things (sigh).

Spindox Spin.com's Spin poll section wants to know between June 12–June 22, if you think a Slash-less Guns N' Roses are living on a prayer (whos, whos, halfway there) if they think they're going to make a comeback after years of sitting on the sidelines.

Going E-Postal Spin.com wants to apologize to Dave Wyndorf from Monster Magnet. He received a paltry 19 percent of the votes for "the most rock" on the now-imposed Manos/Hole tour poll, compared to 43 percent for made-over Courtney and 38 percent for megatomania Manos. Sorry, Dave.

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Please mail all sales separately, and have sign your name to the song provided. It must be under 16 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.

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- 4. Check or money order for \$30.00 per song (U.S. currency only) payable to John Lennon Songwriting Contest. If paying by credit card, \$30.00 per song will be charged to your account.

Entries must be postmarked on or before August 31, 1998.

1. Each song submitted must be competitor's original work. Songs may not exceed five (5) minutes in length. No song previously released and released through national distribution in any country will be eligible. Songs may have multiple co-writers, but music copyright must carry only on the application. 2. Copyright may be held on many songs to be many categories or genres simultaneously, but each entry requires a separate cassette, entry form, song sheet, and money order. Use check or money order for multiple submissions. 3. Entries are not eligible for a non-refundable JWSC is not responsible for late, lost, damaged, misdirected, postal fee (letter or non-refundable entries). 4. Prizes: Winner (12) is grand prize winners will receive \$2,000 in cash, \$5,000 in Yamaha project studio equipment, and a \$5,000 advance from EMI Music.

Publication: One (1) Grand Prize Winner will receive \$20,000 for the "Song of the Year" courtesy of Maxell. Thirty-six (36) Finalists will receive \$1,000. Seventy-two (72) Runners-up will receive project studio equipment.

2. Contest is open to amateur and professional songwriters. Employees of JWSC, Maxell, Yamaha, and other sponsors are not eligible. 3. Winners will be chosen by a panel of judges composed of noted songwriters, producers, and music industry professionals. Songs will be judged based upon melody, instrumentation and lyrics submitted. The quality of performance and presentation will not be considered. Prizes will be awarded jointly to all authors of any song; division of prizes is responsibility of entrant. Void where prohibited. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply.

Winners will be notified by mail and must give notice of affidavit of eligibility/acceptance/eligibility/choice within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and has been fully released to song.

4. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/incorrect information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 16 years of age must be signed by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JWSC and its agents. Entry constitutes agreement to accept terms and conditions of contest.

Winners will be announced by January 15, 2000, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. Cheaters and liars will not be returned. Have read and understood the rules of the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and I accept the terms and conditions of participation. (If entered in under 16 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.)

Signature _____ Date _____

READER STATS: Breakdown of this month's letters...

11%	Ten-page odes to Tom Green from Hawaii's Sean Rivera, who also writes letters to us under several other aliases
1%	Claiming to have directed Fatboy Slim's "Praise You" video (proof: résumé)
10%	Calling what we put out each month "episodes"
1%	On NYC postcards, with the inexplicable declaration that the generation after X is called the Last Generation
5%	From "surrealist, vegan, Christian, kickball-playing alien film directors" (who do not claim to know Fatboy Slim)
90%	Curious demands for less talk and more "hairy bageis"
7%	Wanting to see <i>Spin</i> write a serious book on astrology
45%	From readers who have replaced <i>Spinfluence</i> with <i>Spinformation</i> as their word of choice
60%	Wanting more tits in the magazine—content or otherwise
71%	Implying that we do not, in fact, "give a hoot" about what our readers think
68%	From readers who believe Greg "Cheeseburger" Milner has become the most inimical critic since Chuck Eddy
40%	Wanting more breasts in the magazine—content or otherwise
5%	Helplessly admitting bands would "gladly sell their souls to Satan for two column inches in <i>Spin</i> "

bad habits that they'd go broke if they didn't keep beating this shit in the mud. My dad put himself on the line for them and they repaid him with disrespect, time and time again. Not one of them is half the musician or human being that my father is. Personally, I'd like to take those punks back to the old days for one half of an hour. That's as long as it would take for me to beat the livin' shit outta them and take their instruments and put 'em to real use. They speak of carrying the torch and paying tribute. Hello! The tribute is in the old music—not in this incessant bickering and squabbling and writing of bad new songs. They hide behind the massive shadow cast by an airplane that has been crashing for twenty-one years. I'm glad your article shows just how sad Gary Rossington and those punks are. People go see them in the hopes of hearing a glimpse of those old songs. Ronnie, Steve, and Allen were all incredible songwriters, and the remaining punks don't care about giving a proper "tribute." All they care about is their pocketbooks.

Marshall Pyle
Pickens, South Carolina

Mark Schone's article in your April issue made me mad as hell. Schone describes Southern rock band Lynrd Skynyrd as "the opening act that blew the Who away in 1973." Hal! I don't think so. I may take for clever writing, but it didn't happen, at least not at the show I attended in St. Louis. The band opened for the Who, yes, but "blew" them away? Forget it. I recall that most folks seemed to be checking their watches and wondering when the group would cease and desist. My sole memory

of Lynrd Skynyrd (and their three lead guitar players) was the awful premonition of what they might portend: a band with a line of guitar players like the Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall. The Allman Brothers Band gets the "blame" for starting the inflation factor in the number of guitarists onstage at any one time, but at least there was genius at work when they played, and not just mindless displays of how to play air guitar and lyrically attack Neil Young for speaking out against Southern racism.

Jack W. Hill
Little Rock, Arkansas

Illin' in the Name Of

I am disappointed with your coverage of the Mumia Abu-Jamal benefit show ["Preaching to the Perverted," Live, April]. Not only did you misrepresent Rage, the Beasties, and their fans, but you ignored the particulars about Abu-Jamal's death penalty case. Because there are many discrepancies in the evidence against him, issues of equal protection under the law and the right to a fair trial are being raised. Therefore, bands such as Rage remind us what this country stands for and why we must question authority if the rights of a fellow citizen are not protected. You can write it off as teenage rebellion or hormones, but we know who we are and what we stand for. (And, contrary to popular opinion, we do not need Rage to tell us who we are and what we think.) In the future, it might be wiser to take your readers more seriously. I'm not only talking about your lack of coverage of a serious musical event, but of your attitude toward the reader. Yes, condescending cynicism sells, but don't

forget who pays your electricity bills (and no, I am not talking about your many advertisers). Without us, *Spin* wouldn't exist.

Bariah Bishop
Deansboro, New York

Hosers Who Need Hosers Are the Luckiest Hosers in the World, Eh?

In response to Brad Abel's letter in "Call and Response" [Going Postal, April]: Now Brad, let's not get into name-calling. Your "barren frozen wasteland" remark about Canada shows the vastness of your obvious intellectual shortcoming. Anyone with even a marginal amount of brain power knows Canada is not all igloos and snowshoes, as many Americans believe it is. Although I'm sure you won't believe this, Brad, the world doesn't end with the continental U.S. Before you spew inaccuracies about the great country to your north, try learning something about us, so you don't sound like a stereotypical redneck from Tennessee.

Shane Mark
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

It's a lot of fun to read the letters in *Going Postal* and see how readers either praise a rock star or put *Spin* down for not giving someone enough credit. Hey kids, we're all people—be it black, white, brown, purple, gay, straight, or try-sexual—and we all go to the bathroom like everyone else. Who gives a rat's ass that Lauren Hill didn't get the cover [January] even though she received the title "Artist of the Year." Turn on your radio, and you'll hear her about two times an hour. She's won five Grammys and has two kids. Now I ask you, should she care about not being on one

Call and Response:

I am offended and extremely angered by what your writers put for No. 5 on the scale from one to ten in the Reviews section [April]—"Young Black Teenagers." Being a young black teenager, I demand an explanation of exactly what the hell this rating means. Is this supposed to be some stupid joke, because we aren't laughing. It is racist and insulting and I want to cancel my subscription.

Jeanine Finley
Overland Park, Kansas

Dear Jeanine,

Your letter disturbs us. We hope that you feel better knowing that we here at *Spin* are not racist. In fact, the only people that we routinely make fun of are German people.

Feeling greatly misunderstood, we would like to explain the rating system for the Reviews section, to which you're referring. Mostly out of a feeling of loyalty to an idea that once seemed fresh, we have been assigning different values to the numbers since *Spin*'s September 1998 issue, in which the theme was "Things Found on TV" and "Judd Hirsch" represented a 4, which incidentally was awarded to Cam'ron for his *Confessions of a Fire Lip*.

More to the point, in April, the theme was "white rappers." While not exactly huge in the early '90s, Young Black Teenagers—a band of white teenagers—did release two records under the auspices of the Bomb Squad and famed Public Enemy collaborator and producer, Gary G-Wiz (who discovered both YBT and Hyenas in the Desert). Rap fans and connoisseurs may know Young Black Teenagers from such hits as "Dial M for Madonna," "Daddy Called Me Niga Cause I Liked to Rhyme," "My TV Went Black and White on Me," "Proud to Be Black," and "Time to Make the Dough Nuts."

"Culturally black" and clearly not receiving the respect they deserve, ATA, Firstborn, Skribble, and Kamron (the members of YBT) were sandwiched between Marky Mark and Mel Brooks. (Mel earned his No. 6 position for penning the "Sherwood Forest Rap" in *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*.)

So, really, it's YBT—the band—who should be offended, and not a PYT such as yourself. Thank you.



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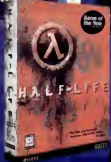
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GOING POSTAL

magazine cover? I'm sorry to say, but my day doesn't come to a screeching halt because Monica hit Brandy or Alanis has emerged from depression.

Stan Lobby
New Brunswick, New Jersey

I don't know what Jessie Kim meant by "Down with ICP" [Going Postal, April]. I thought he was promoting ICP—either way, I want to agree with that guy. Spin, you're great, but let's face it, most of your readers aren't 12-year-old blond girls with no life. We hate Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync. We need ICP, and, no, the Dark Circus isn't going to come and get you. But you might want to be careful, 'cause you never know.

Angela Walton
Sanbornville, New Hampshire

Okay, Kid Rock, I Mean, Julie

I am thoroughly overjoyed about the article on Kid Rock in April's issue ("For Those About to Rap...") [Noise, April]. However, I am also thoroughly disgusted. Every time Kid Rock is mentioned, it is guaranteed Vanilla Ice will come up. Let's get something straight: Kid Rock is an individual like no other. I have never heard anything like what Kid Rock does on one CD. It doesn't matter that you're saying, "He's no Vanilla Ice." Yeah, so he's a white boy who uses rap (along with every other style of music) to express himself. These are not grounds to even think about bringing up Vanilla Ice. Next time you have something to say about Kid Rock, leave the "V" word out of it.

Julie Murray
Cincinnati, Ohio

Hey, You and Your Round Bacon Can Take Off, Eh?

Spin makes me want to smoke, get drunk, buy clothes from the Gap, and spend way too much money on new technology I don't even need. The last thing it makes me want to do is go out and buy music.

Paul Abramson
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Dear Devon, Meet Me in the Lunch Room. Love, Spin 25

Dear Spin 25: Where have you gone, my beloved "Spin 25" [Exposure, April]? After reading the latest issue of Spin, I sensed something was not right. It did not take me long to realize that it was you who had mysteriously disappeared. I flipped through once, twice, even three times in a desperate search to find you. What would I do without your compass to guide me each week? When I first saw the Fatboy Slim video for "Praise You," I wondered if there were any other souls who fully appreciated its avant-garde production. Spin 25 ended that mystery. After hours staring at Jennifer Love Hewitt, I found comfort in Spin 25. You told me that others too had found comfort in her bosomnic perfection. So why have you been so forsaken? And then I stumbled

upon the Reader Stats. Oh Spin 25, you are so unappreciated! Please, I beg you, let your departure be only a temporary one.

Devon Reed
Berkeley, California

Sean Landers: Making You Think Sometimes

I've just finished reading Genius Lessons No. 35 by Sean Landers [April] and nearly pissed myself laughing. The man is funny. So why are people constantly going off about how much they can't stand his work? For because someone isn't belching or farting, or getting hit in the nuts, doesn't mean it isn't humorous. Sometimes you actually have to think. So, to all those who dislike Landers' work, quit demanding to be spoon-fed and use your brain muscles. And if that doesn't work, stop smoking the crack.

Jamie Thompson
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Viva Hate

I hate your magazine so very much and think you are distorting children's minds, so keep your trash to your darn self.

Jane Semei
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Corrections

In the April issue, please note the following corrections for "Terror Wrist Invasion": Q-Bert and Mix Master Mike won the DMC championships in '92 and '93, but not in '94. Kid Koala was not named "1996 DMC Scratching Champ."

In the May issue, Spin misidentified the band Ugly Ducking, below, in "Incoming" [Noise].



In the June issue, Ben Folds Five were mistakenly identified as Ben Folds in the review of *The Unauthorized Biography of Reinhold Messner* [Reviews].

Write Going Postal, Spin, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017, or e-mail goingpostal@spinmag.com. Always include your full name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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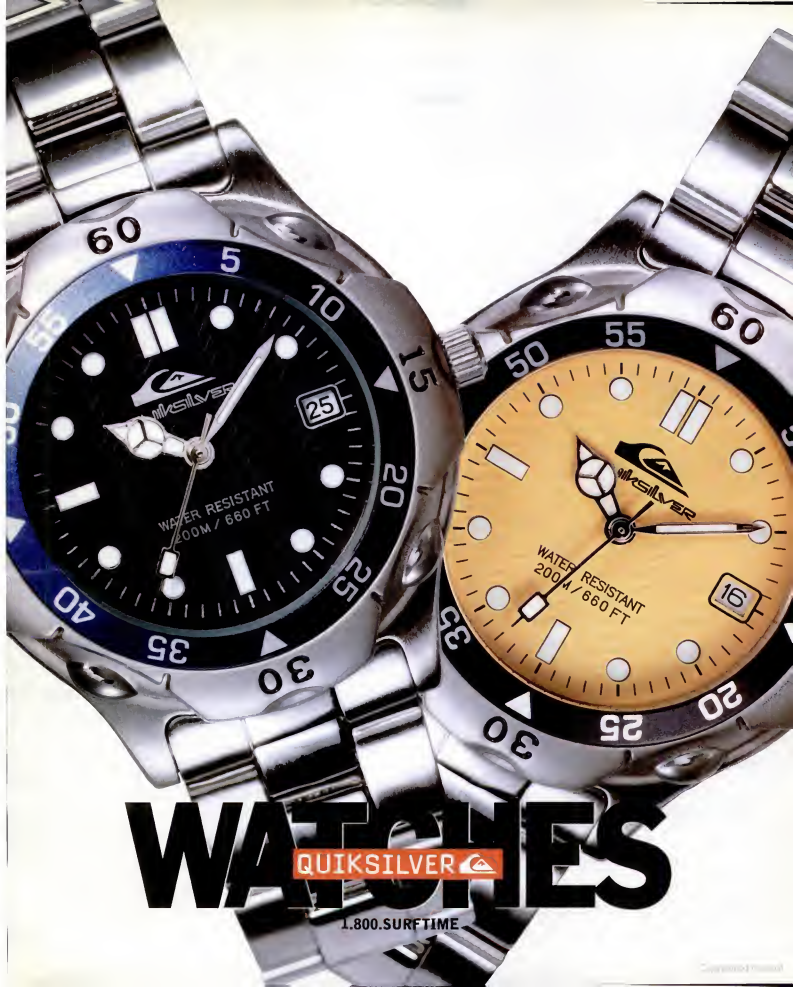
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Talk to the hand: Missy Elliott.

THE "BITCH" IS BACK

THROUGH CLOWNING AROUND, MISSY ELLIOTT IS TAKING ON *DA REAL WORLD*

Celebrities may be different from the rest of us, but beneath their aocks, they too, have ugly feet. Which brings Missy Elliott to the funky, downtown New York nail salon Reacue. Sandal weather is just around the corner, as is the June release of *Da Real World*, the long-awaited follow-up to Elliott's multiplatinum debut, 1997's *Sups Dups Fly*. "For this album I wrote a lot of catchy hooks," she says, cautiously dipping her feet in an aromatherapeutic milk bath. "They're hot"—meaning her hooks, not her toes—

"but they're simple. My favorite's when I say, 'Why you all in my grill?' / Can you pay my bills?' / Let me know if you will / 'Cause a chick gotta live."

And this particular chick's gotten used to livin' large. In less than two years, she's evolved from an in-demand writer/producer to a critically lauded performer who heads her own record label, served as a hip-hop presence on 1998's Lilith Fair, and has even rapped for the Gap. Image-wise, Elliott comes off almost cartoonish,

from her trademark "hee-ha" laugh, to her Michelin Man outfits, to making herself over as a Japanimated superheroin in her "Sock It to Me" video. But like many comedians, her urge to provoke laughter is a mechanism for dealing with deep-rooted trauma. Elliott may look comfortable today, giggling as she hikes up her red Adidas track pants for the pedicurist, but she says she's still haunted by memories of growing up poor in Portsmouth, Virginia. And those same feet once ran two miles in

(continued) the snow to escape an abusive home life.

"My father never hit me, but he had me living in a lot of fear," she says, looking down at her submerged ankles. "I couldn't enjoy life like the rest of the kids. I didn't wanna go and play, 'cause I didn't know when I would come home and my mother would be dead. I was always scared. I was sexually abused for a whole year when I was eight. He was like, my third cousin—16 or something. So you'd think I'd be totally, 'Oh, I hate men!' But I'm just careful. I can read a person quick and be like, 'He foul' or 'He cool.'"

Most cool is fellow Virginian Timbaland, Elliott's coproducer, sonic soulmate, and best friend of 12 years. "The only therapy I had was believing in God," Elliott says. "That's the strongest connection for me and Timbaland: We are spiritually related. I can't compare us to anybody else, but the closest would be Terry Lewis and Jimmy Jam back in the day."

Together Elliott and Timbaland have modernized the sound of hip-hop/R&B with studio tricks, sound effects, and

futuristic beats. On *Da Real World*, they forgo the whimsical (cooing babies and quacking duck samples) for a decidedly darker route—to le Janet Jackson's nasty turn on *The Velvet Rope*. The most surprising noise is Elliott's punk-inspired screaming "You been suckin' his dick! He been tastin' my clit" on a catty duet with Missy protégée Lil' Mo called "You Don't Know"—an NC-17 retelling of "The Boy le Mine." Which might explain why Eminem, who makes a typically foul-mouthed cameo on "Play That Funky Music," was attracted to the project. "I have respect for women who respect me and themselves," he says. "Missy doesn't try to sell herself on anything other than her musical talent."

Still, the explicit sex and profanity isn't what you'd expect from Elliott, a devout, churchgoing Baptist. "I go through battles where I'm like, 'Dag, I'm still cussing on albums, and I don't wanna cuss no more,'" she says. "Then I'm, like, 'Well, the album's finished.'" Elliott shrugs. "I'm trying to get it together. I stopped a lot of things—I won't drink and I don't smoke. But I don't want people to be like, 'Okay, now she's

Reverend Elliott.' I named my album *Da Real World* because I talk about real, reel, real topics—smoking and drinking and teens having sex. But I'm not saying, 'Suzy, who's 13, go hump Bobby.'"

Whether or not it warrants a "Parental Advisory" sticker, Elliott's new album shouldn't prove any more shocking than MTV's soap *The Real World*, an admitted guilty pleasure. "Those shows always catch my attention," she says. "I saw one where the dude called the girl a bitch, and she started fighting him and they kicked her out of the house. I was like, 'Will she be mad at me, 'cause my single's called, 'She's a Bitch.''" Of course, Elliott's definition isn't the one found in Webster's. "The way I'm using it is positive," she says. "A bitch is a strong female who knows what she wants." Then, turning to the pedicurist, she snaps, "You got white? I want that white nail polish on my toes." **JAMES PATRICK HERMAN**

For sounds and words from Missy, log on to Spin.com.

B.I.G. TROUBLE

DEATH ROW'S SUGE KNIGHT NAMED AS SUSPECT IN NOTORIOUS B.I.G.'S MURDER



Between a protracted federal racketeering investigation and numerous assault claims over the years, police crawling around Death Row Records is nothing new—at this point, they probably know the door code. But on April 20, approximately 50 members of the LAPD descended on Death Row's Beverly Hills offices with a search warrant and a stunning announcement—imprisoned Death Row CEO Marion "Suge" Knight was a key suspect in the March 1997 murder of the Notorious B.I.G.

This was big, right? With one statement, every East Coast-West Coast aye-for-an-aye scenario was reactivated. While police loaded boxes of Death Row business documents and computer hard drives into a mobile crime lab, a tow truck pulled into the label's lot trailing a dark-purple Chevrolet Impala that matched the description of the car used in the shooting. After two years of withering leads and shell-shocked witnesses, were police really about to pin Biggie's death on Suge Knight?

Nope. Not yet. And maybe not ever. "We believe that Mr. Knight may be one of several people involved in a murder-for-profit conspiracy," says Lieutenant Al Michelen, one of the officers assisting two full-time detectives on the case. Police say they'll know more after looking through their Death Row haul. While the presumed motive is Knight's long-standing feud with Biggie's label, Sean "Puffy" Combs's Bad Boy Entertainment, there are some conspicuous holes in the "Suge Did It" scenario. Knight was already several months into a nine-year prison sentence for probation violation at the time of the shooting. Suge's influence with the Mob Piru Bloods

gang is legendary enough to be cause for suspicion, but to orchestrate a conspiracy he would presumably have needed some privacy, and California prison officials insist that all of Knight's phone calls and visits (except for those with his attorneys) have been supervised by prison employees.

The Impala—the nearest thing yet to a smoking gun—could turn out to be closer to a red herring. Police say they seized it from one of four Death Row-linked locations, they would not comment, however, on whether one of those locations was Knight's auto refinishing business. As for the wisdom of taking out his most celebrated enemy at a public party, from a car linked to Death Row, in a plan coordinated from a closely watched prison cell, one Knight confidant says, "I know Suge can be a fool, but he's not that big a fool."

That said, the squeeze on Knight didn't come out of thin air. A police source claims the April 20 searches were catalyzed by a tip from a credible informant, and that because of the questionable politics of past LAPD investigations, detectives want people to know they're still on the case. Indeed, their work has resulted in a suspect sketch, hundreds of interviews, even the seizure of another Impala. But perhaps because almost every other previous lead has evaporated, by the end of the week, police had rained in their optimism. Knight was no longer a "key suspect," just a suspect, and police admit that arrests don't appear imminent. "There are a lot of ups and downs in a case like this," says Michelen. "When you get new leads you start up 100 percent again. We'll beat this one to death and see what we come up with." **JOHN TYRANGIEL**

Big dawg: Did Knight conspire to bump off Biggie?

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» BACKSTAGE PASS

KIM, JENNIFER, AND GERI PUT OUT...ALBUMS, THAT IS BY JAMES PATRICK HERMAN

BIGGIE LIVES ON

"Those of you who have not received checks from certain people in the room," said radio personality **Ed Lover**, "this is not the time." Or the place. Lover was emceeing "A.B.I.G. Night Out"—the March 30 gala dinner in Manhattan that netted a quarter of a million for the Christopher Wallace Foundation, which provides books and computers for underfunded schools. "It's a celebration for **Biggie**," said **Busta Rhymes**, who shared a lengthy embrace with **Wyclef Jean**. Lover gave shout-outs to them, as well as to **Sean "Puffy" Combs**, **Faith Evans**, **Lil' Kim**, **Mary J. Blige**, **Missy Elliott**, **Mase**, **Donald Trump**, and **Adolph** (a.k.a. NYC Mayor **Rudy Giuliani**, who was not actually in the house). "It's good to see the **Junior M.A.F.I.A.** in suits—and they're not even in court!" joked funnyman **Lover**. The evening's highlights included an emotional biomontage of Wallace's life and a raffle of ghetto-superstar goods such as Chanel shades, a Fendi bag, and **Avirex** jackets (**Blige** won one). "I feel like **Roberto Benigni**," gushed **Voletta Wallace**, **Biggie's** mother, upon receiving the first annual B.I.G. Heart Award.

The B.I.G. Memory Loss Award went to **Puffy**, who forgot the words to "I'll Be Missing You." "Hold on, hold on!" he said mid-lyric, halting an entire gospel choir headed by **Evana**. "I started at the wrong space. I ain't done this song in a long time." Post-gala, Lil' Kim cited that particular moment as her favorite, no doubt because **Puffy** is executive producing her forthcoming follow-up to *Hardcore*. "It'll definitely be more mature," she says, "but I'm still Lil' Kim." You better motherfuckin' believe it....

JACKO'S BOY WONDER

Kim seems to be the only hot artist that 21-year-old megaproducer **Rodney Jerkins** isn't working with. "Puffy, **Jermaine**, **Timbaland**—they're just doing R&B and hip-hop," says **Jerkins**, speaking from his Los Angeles recording studio. "You couldn't call any of them up to do **LaAnn Rimes**. I'm not being nasty, but I studied classical for eight years. I'm in a class of my own." If you don't believe him, just ask: Sony honcho **Tommy Mottola**, who has signed **Jerkins** to a multimillion-dollar production and distribution deal for his Darkchild Entertainment label. But first **Jerkins** must complete Shrengali duties for **Rimes**, the **Spice Girls**, and **Mottola's** latest pet project, **Jennifer Lopez**. "She's gonna be like a Latin Janet," **Jerkins**

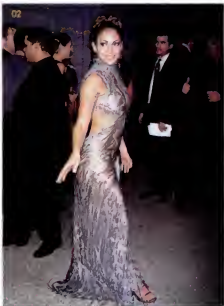


says. "She's got an amazing butt, but past that, she works hard. I'm not saying she's a **Whitney Houston**, but her voice is good enough to make it work."

The biggest coup to date, however, is landing the new **Michael Jackson** album. "His image is gonna change," **Jerkins** predicts. "I'm hoping that me being around him can help." Having worked with everyone from **Brandy** and **Monica** to the **Gloved One**, who does **Jerkins** say is the biggest diva of them all? "Whitney. I stayed in her house [while recording *My Love Is Your Love*], and I'd be sitting around waiting, and she'd finally call and be like, 'I ain't feelin' it today.' Which is not right, but, as far as **Jerkins** is concerned, it's okay....

GERI TAKES MANHATTAN

Ginger Spice is dead, but not forgotten. "She'll always be a part of me," says former **Girl Power** poster girl, **Geri Halliwell**, from inside her JFK Airport-bound limo. "She's the clumsy girl in me—cheeky and naughty—who comes out at the worst possible moments." **Ginger** was nowhere in sight when **Halliwell** took on a roomful of hardass New York music journalists at a press conference in April, proving that, indeed, there is life after **Spice World**; specifically, her solo album, *Schizophrenic*. "I was shitting myself!" **Halliwell** says of the stress. Of course,



this is the same woman who once publicly spanked the **Prince of Wales**. "Charles laughed and walked away—then he came back for more," she recalls. "It's the Spanish in me." Or perhaps it's the influence of saucy gal-pal **George Michael**. "I don't hang out with celebrities, but he and I grew up in the same neighborhood," **Halliwell** says. "The best advice he gave me was to take my time [after leaving the **Spice Girls**!—that people would wait for me. Pop music doesn't have to be crap," she adds. "I know I can't compete with all the rap artists and soul divas. I've just got to be me." As opposed to, say, a wannabe. ■



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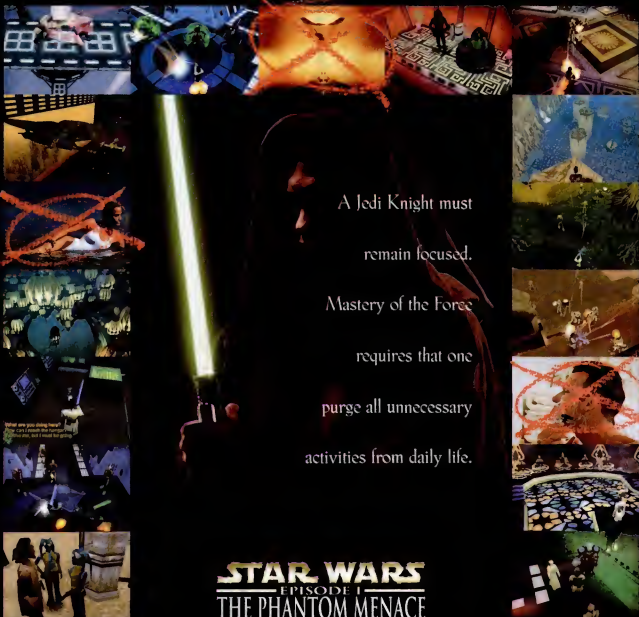


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Smack my witch up: From left, Tommy Stewart, Sully Erna, Robbie Merrill, and Tony Rombola.

WIZARDS OF OZZFEST

GODSMACK CAST SPELLS OVER THIS SUMMER'S METAL HORDES

Onstage, Sully Erna is a pint-size, tattoo-covered ball of rage. He pours beer over his head, cannonballs into the crowd, and punctuates between-song banter with a hearty "Put your hands in the air, motherfucker!" Out of the strobe, however, the 31-year-old leader of gloom-metal quartet Godsmack is almost cuddly. And he still finds it hard to believe that his band's self-titled debut, driven by the bleep-worthy kiss-off single, "Whatever," has been certified gold, and that he's playing Ozzfest this summer. "We find ourselves peeking from behind the curtain, wondering if this thing is going to sell out," he says.

Maybe that's because Erna's never had it easy. As a boy growing up in Hallowtown—a.k.a. Lawrence, Massachusetts—he watched shootouts from his front porch. As a future high-school dropout, the barely 5'5" Erna skipped class to beat up other kids playing hooky. "It really grosses me out to think that's how I was," he says one afternoon before playing to 1,600 fans in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Like any screw-up worth his detention slips, Erna found metal, and in 1995 began to seek out like-minded individuals to form his dream band. After several false starts, he booked up with Robbie Merrill, who ran a vinyl siding business. They recruited guitarist Tony Rombola, a perpetual stoner in a local cover band, and drummer Tommy Stewart, an all-around nice guy who, at lunch before the gig, requests four forks

with his slice of key lime pie just so he can share.

Godsmack were longshots from the start—grizzled townies in a Boston scene that snubbed anyone not down with collegiate pop-rock or feux aka. The guys toiled for two years, perfecting their mid-tempo metal-edged thrash in the run-down, working-class suburbia until Rombola, a jock at beeper-friendly WAAF, started playing them on his night show in 1997.

Along the way, Erna, who had always been fascinated by the spirit world, began to study witchcraft. When asked about it, he gets testy. "People don't ask everybody about Christianity," he whines. But isn't this witch thing in every Godsmack press release? Erna relaxes. "It's all about karma. If you want to be a shitehead, expect shite things to happen to you. If you're a good person, you'll be okay."

It's a swell philosophy, and one that Erna discards at the green room door as he morphs from soft-spoken goodfella into metal monster. "If you can't handle the pit, get the fuck out," he belovs. Later, he leads the crowd in flipping a group bird: "How good does that fuckin' feel!" After the show, Erna hangs behind the venue, paying as much attention to the guitar-worshipping teenage boys as to the gussied-up groupie hopefuls. At one point he sprays a stream of beer onto the pavement near a woman. She is not amused. "Sorry," Erna says sheepishly. He looks like he really means it. **GEOFF SHEPHERS**

BEHIND THE SCENES ROCK STAR PRICKS

DR. SHARON ZADANOFF

JOB DESCRIPTION

Acupuncturist and chiropractor to the rock stars

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Has stuck needles in members of Nirvana, R.E.M., Matchbox 20, Pearl Jam, and Prodigy

CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At a time when everyone has a guru, the Brooklyn-born chiropractor—known simply as Dr. Sharon—is a non-nonsense, needle-toting mama who blends medical science and New Age mysticism with good old-fashioned TLC. With just her fingers and a set of sharpies, she has become the music industry's most coveted backstage superhero.

PROFESSIONAL STATEMENT

"We all think, yeah, a lot of rock stars are focused on themselves," Dr. Sharon says. "But they're doing interviews all day, traveling, getting onstage, and giving 100 percent. I let them chill and think about themselves."

REFERENCES

Dave Grohl, Foo Fighters: Grohl met the good doctor during his Nirvana days, when Kurt's perpetually pained tummy demanded special attention. One night, Grohl's shoulder started throbbing so bad he could barely get through a sat. "I don't believe in the guru thing," he says. "Dr. Sharon is like having a best friend. She gave me this electrotherapy shit. She put patches on my shoulder and plugged them into what looked like an old Fender amplifier. I'm thinking, 'I might as well go lick a nine-volt battery.' The next day it was healed."

Michael Stipe, R.E.M.: Stipe returned to the band's tour just three weeks after a hernia operation. Every night, Dr. Sharon stuck needles around his scar to ease the tight muscles. "I had to be carried onstage," he says. "She helped me get back on track. She heightens your own sense of how to take care of yourself when you don't have a massage therapist, herbalist, or nutritionist around."

Rob Thomas, Matchbox 20: Like Grohl, Thomas was also skeptical. "It always seemed like pampering, not a necessity," he says. Then the singer found himself self-dredging before an appearance on the *Letterman* show. Backstage, Dr. Sharon created one of her improvised, candlelit treatment chambers, then poked a needle through the tip of his schnozz. "It hurt like hell," he says. "I didn't realize all my stress was bottled up in my nose." **G.Z.**

Sticking it in:
Dr. Sharon in
her office.





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THE DEVIL AND MR. BILL

KID ROCK COMES INCORRECT—POLITICALLY AND OTHERWISE—THIS TIME ON TV

"I don't know shit about politics," Kid Rock offers, "except that the President's a pimp."

Luckily, that's as much as he needs to know to get on television. On *Politically Incorrect*—where, as super-smug host Bill Maher is fond of saying, everything is satirized for your protection—ignorance rarely impedes celebrity debate. For Rock, the success of his latest album, *Devil Without a Cause*, is credential enough. And



after sizing up the show's other guests—comedian Howie Mandel, conservative radio host Dennis Prager, and deaf actress Marlee Matlin—the Detroit rapper is feeling pretty cocky. Loitering outside the ABC studio having a cigarette, Rock concedes that Prager is smart, "but I'm witty."

Of course, a bit of preparation never hurt anyone. A few minutes later, Rock is summoned by the show's executive producer, Scott Carter, for a briefing on the day's taping. "The model for this is a cocktail party," Carter explains. Rock hoists his ABC-provided Beck's Dark in the air in a show of preparedness. In order to "ensure some sense of disagreement" among the panelists, Carter runs down the show's topics for Rock, who offers his off-the-cuff reactions. First up, whether a man who failed to take action as his wife was raped at gunpoint is guilty of cowardice ("Depends on how much he likes his wife"); next, a politician trying to wipe out ethnic

a violent zeitgeist! ("Would it be okay if I sued them for stupidity?").

Thus ready for debate, Rock is released back into the Green Room, where the topic is *Celebrity Networking '01*. Rock and Mandel giggle over ways to augment their day's appearance fee by inking an extra digit or two onto their \$553 checks. Rock and Prager's rapport is more strained.

"Kid? Kid Rock? What do I call you?" the gruff right-wing pundit asks with thinly masked condescension.

However, when *Love Connection's* Chuck Woolery (on hand for the *PI* taping immediately following Rock's) enters the room, the rapper nearly leaps out of his maroon-and-white Ben Davis ensemble. He pleads to have his picture taken with the wizened, orange-skinned Woolery, who compliments Rock on his fedora. The two are inseparable for the rest of the day. In fact, Rock will exchange phone numbers with Woolery before he leaves.



Kid Rock's day on *Politically Incorrect*:

- 01 Learning how to curse in sign language from Marlee Matlin.
- 02 Getting mad love from Chuck Woolery.
- 03 Trying to appear thoughtful on the set with Matlin and Bill Maher.
- 04 Beer-less in the Green Room.

celebration days ("You gotta get with the party"; and finally,

a couple, whose child was killed in school, has filed a lawsuit against 25 entertainment entities "for creating

"You never know if I'm gonna have to call Chuck to bail me out of jail the next time I'm in L.A.," he notes.

Meanwhile, there's a show to do. The guests, plus Matlin's interpreter, take to the set. As the cameras roll, Rock holds his own amid the five-headed conversational hydra, drawing big applause for his chivalric stance on the rape-at-gunpoint topic ("That's your wife, man!") and slipping in a crack at Prager's expense ("I think I should sue Dennis for wearing a red tie; he's making my eyes hurt"). Rock even manages to look sophisticated as he daintily sips from a black mug—which is full of beer. During breaks, he and Maher discuss the relative chick-attracting merits of appearing on cable versus network television (advantage: network). Matlin teaches Rock how to curse in sign language, which he's still practicing when the cameras resume rolling.

"People are gonna think I was doing gang signs, which I do not want," Rock frets after the taping, momentarily displaying something close to concern. Then, snapping back into character, he puts the experience into proper perspective. "These shows are supposed to be fun," he says with a shrug. "Anyone taking this shit seriously has a problem." **TIM KENNELHALL**

WORK IN PROGRESS

Who: DJ Shadow and Friends
What: The Quannum Projects label
First release: *Quannum Spectrum*
Release date:

07.13.99

DJ Shadow may be comfortable inhabiting abstract soundscapes, but the music industry is a different story. Last year, label problems almost got the best of him. "I got depressed for exactly six weeks," he says, "and then I decided life goes on."

Taking the D.I.Y. route, Shadow, along with rappers Latyrx and Blackalicious, launched the Quannum Projects label, an offshoot of Shadow's early-'90s Solesides collective. "With Solesides, we had this image of being underground martyrs,"

Shadow says. "With Quannum, we're more forthcoming about trying new things."

Quannum's first release is a collaborative affair credited to Quannum Spectrum, an ad-hoc crew comprising the label's non-chos and various guests. As Shadow begins recording his own album, he hopes Quannum will be a safe haven with modest expectations. "We won't knock Britney Spears off the charts, but we finally got it together. This should've happened a long time ago." **JESSICA LETHEMAN**



Making the Quannum leap: from left, The Gift of Gab, Lyric Bone, Chief Xcel, DJ Shadow, and Lateef.

WILL ALTERNATIVE ROCK GET ITS GROOVE BACK?

Rock'n'roll is here to stay, but some styles sulk around longer than others. The Great Alt-Rock Gold Rush of the early '90s paid off handsomely for bands like Pearl Jam, but their sales figures have since sagged under the weight of a world dominated by hip-hop, R&B, and a new generation of rockers. In the next few months, one-time heavyweights Nine Inch Nails, Stone Temple Pilots, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and former Soundgarden singer Chris Cornell will all release long-awaited albums that would have been guaranteed hits a few years ago. Which raises the question: If a Stone Temple Pilot drops in the forest of the marketplace, do record-store cash registers still make a sound?

"A couple of years ago, I would've predicted a rush of people for these albums," says Joe Krida, general manager of a Tower Records in Chicago. "But I don't think any band has a built-in following anymore." Cornell, he says, "will really have to work it." As for the Chili Peppers—"no one's going to guarantee that an established act will hold onto its audience—the Beastie Boys grabbed youth culture by its baggy pants last year, but R.E.M. and the Smashing Pumpkins have had trouble equaling their earlier success. The most recent albums of new material by Soundgarden, STP, and the Chili Peppers sold less than half as much as their previous releases. "Generation X is aging, and Generation Y is coming up," says Jim Kerr, alternative radio editor at the trade journal *Radio & Records*. "If you're 18 years old, you've lived your life exposed to hip-hop"—and successful young bende such as Korn reflect that sensibility. In fact, if you're 18 years old, you were three when the first Chili Peppers album came out.

To mount a successful comeback, alternative rockers need to retain their old fans while capturing new ones—and representatives for these bands are making plans to help them do just that. To **make an initial splash**, labels will first try to reintroduce aging alt-rockers to the public—Nothing Records has already run Nine Inch Nails ads on MTV that simply say "1999" in the group's signature font. Stone Temple Pilots recently performed a set at Los Angeles' ultra-trendy Viper Room, and the Chili Peppers will play a six-city tour of all-ages clubs, aimed at promoting tolerance among young people in the wake of the Littleton killings. "Doing a free show or an audience appreciation thing is a good way to let people know you're still out there," says Stone Temple Pilots manager Steve Stewart. "Ten years ago, once a band hit stadiums,



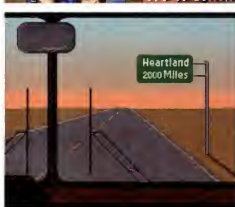
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02 Automatic for the people: To sound fresh, press the flesh.



Cover me: To look best, work the press.



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they never came down. Now even Metallica have their garage thing."

Once the seed is planted, bands need to **connect with consumers** as much and as personally as possible. Representatives for many acts see online chats and Webcasts as an easy, inexpensive way to reach fans. (The last time Nine Inch Nails released an album the Web barely existed, and the group is still without an official site.) There's no substitute for face time, though, so Stewart says STP may make a few in-store appearances to underscore the fact they're back together.

With the fans back in the fold, these groups will **work the mass media**—starting with the alternative rock radio stations they once dominated. "Radio will be very receptive to these artists—we'd be stupid not to," says Lisa Worden, music director at KROQ, Los Angeles' Modern Rock bellwether. In the past, alternative rock bands could score cross-format hits, but they'll now be facing a growing sentiment among the Modern Rock radio programmers that the younger segment of their audience doesn't care as much about rock. "When a superstar releases a new record, it's a breath of fresh air, because it breeds familiarity with the audience," says Kerr. "The flip side is you have a community of Doubting Thomas radio programmers skeptical of people who haven't released anything in a while."

That's where the press comes in. In order to make sure fans know they'll be hearing a band and not just a song, record companies have to convince journalists that a band's return is big news. "We want to choose the right opportunities to make sure everyone knows the Stone Temple Pilots are back," says Atlantic Records VP Ron Shapiro. Stewart puts it more directly: "The press is a hungry animal. If you leave your dog in the garage for two weeks, whatever you feed it, it'll eat."

Finally, alt-rockers have to **kill the road**. "Touring is advertising," says Stewart. "The guy who shows up at a Korn show isn't reading *GO* or *Details*, and he isn't reading fashion magazines." Alternative rock is still a big live draw, and Cornell, the Chili Peppers, and the Pilots plan on touring through the summer and beyond. Nothing Records refuses to confirm anything about Trent Reznor's plans, but he'll probably be a big attraction if he does tour.

Other first-wave alternative rock bands will have trouble regaining the popularity they once enjoyed, according to Nirvne biographer Michael Azerrad. "Velocity-wise, bands like Limp Bizkit leave the Chili Peppers in the dust," he says. "For hormonal adolescents, the choice is clear." **GREG MILLER**



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Record companies are nervous about the implications of the Internet, but that's not stopping them from using it to increase their profits. In an aggressive move that could eventually change the balance of power in the music industry, two of the "big five" labels, BMG Entertainment and Universal Music Group, have joined forces to create a high-profile Web site that will sell albums directly to fans—thus competing with the music stores that have long been their partners. The site, getmusic.com, will soon relaunch with a higher profile as a series of genre-based music "channels" that feature videos, concert broadcasts, and click-and-buy links that will let fans purchase discs by such BMG and Universal acts as Eminem, TLC, and Dave Matthews. Warner and Sony have already teamed up on a

"RECORD COMPANIES HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO SELL DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLIC. IF IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE THEY WERE DOING A LOT OF EXCLUSIVE STUFF WITH BIG ARTISTS, I THINK THEY WOULD BE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE."

similar, albeit lower-profile, venture, and traditional retailers have speculated that the conglomerates may press their advantage by offering pre-release CDs and exclusive tracks.

"Record companies have always tried to sell directly to the public," says Mike Farrace, Tower Records' vice president of worldwide marketing, citing "record clubs" like Columbia House as an example. But he doubts labels will risk alienating billion-dollar-a-year chains like Tower. "If it got to the point where they were doing a lot of exclusive stuff with big artists, I think they would be making a big mistake. Retailers would strenuously object—and possibly even retaliate."

The new site also means that Internet music merchants like Amazon.com face a situation in which some of their major suppliers are now also true competitors. But there may be plenty of room for everyone—John Diamond, CEO of the online music store CDNow, predicts Internet sales will grow to 10 to 15 percent of the \$45 billion global music business within three years.

The GetMusic venture is also an indication that major labels are preparing to market digital downloads of single songs and entire albums—possibly as soon as the holiday season. "Anyone getting involved in the Internet will be moving in that area," Diamond says. For the moment, though, music retailers are taking the announcement in stride—while fortifying their own positions on the Web. "We're still their friends," says Farrace. "While there is certainly some greed, it's too precious of a relationship to throw in the garbage." DAVID J. PRINCE

JEERS OF A CLOWN

CAN ICP REALLY CLOWN? REAL-LIFE BOZOS BREAK IT DOWN



The Detroit shock-hop duo Insane Clown Posse, who have just released their fifth album, *The Amazing Jeckel Brothers*, have managed to parlay their macabre buffoonery into mass notoriety. But would Bozo approve of Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope's obscenely laden songs? Where exactly does the band patrol within the clowning tradition? *Spin* arranged a screening of ICP's 1998 long-form video *Shockumentary* for some members of existential, vaudevillean clown troupe the New Bozenna and asked: Just who do these clowns think they are? **TIM KENNELLY**

The New Bozenna: from left, David Costabile, Michael Dahlen, and Kevin Isola. (Reinn Wilson not pictured.)

THE LOOK

Dreadlocks, goatees, and black-and-white greasepaint configured into vaguely Kiss-like expressions of menace.

Raim Wilson: "It's like wearing a mask, which highlights the comic side of the existential despair of the human condition. It focuses the vulnerability to laser-like precision. I think the kids are identifying with their pain."

Kevin Isola: "I'd imagine it's pretty difficult to get that makeup out of his beard. I'm feeling strangely attracted to Shaggy 2 Dope."

THE SCHTICK

Clowns of horror, ICP detail contemporary societal ills (racist rednecks, dysfunctional families, etc.) with violent and profane lyrics.

David Costabile: "These guys are *buffoon* clowns—grotesque clowns who would imitate 14th-century Plague victims. They entertain by reviling, so it's all piss, poo, and fart jokes."

K.J.: "And they're mean, too. It goes right into Don Rickles. The German section of any good porn store has elements of *buffoon*: the scat suits, the doody-eating."

THE MAD PROPS

Onstage, ICP combine classic clown conceits, such as trampolines and caged apes, with their own moves, like liberally dosing the audience with fentanyl, a regional, dirt-cheap "ghetto pop."

R.W.: "If we were going to pour a beverage on

our audience, it would probably be whole milk."

D.C.: "They throw Faygo, we throw Wonder Bread. Food is a big clown theme."

K.J.: "How about the thirsty little children who are longing for a sip of that soda? I would say to anyone who's going to an ICP concert: Bring a straw."

THE VIDEOS

"Chicken Huntin'": An exorcism of rednecks, performed, in part, while dancing on an abandoned car. **R.W.:** "Makes me think of rubber chickens. It's no accident they're talking about chicken pot pie. Beef is not funny, but chicken is."

"Hokus Pokus": Posing as garbagemen, ICP strew refuse on upper-class lawns and decapitate a lawn jockey. Then, morphing into grave-diggers, the duo exhume corpses, which proceed to dance robotically.

R.W.: "Class issues are really big in clowning, and that's something ICP bring to their work. By destroying a rich person's lawn jockey, they're challenging the bourgeoisie."

D.C.: "Grave-digging—just like the clowns in *Hamlet*, Act 5. They're Shakespearean clowns!"

RINGLOS OR DING-A-LINGS?

K.J.: "Well, they are clowns—we've established that. ICP could kick our clown booty, although that 2 Dope Whatever is kind of a pretty boy."

R.W.: "I'd say they're equal parts German porn and Ringling Brothers."



To-gal To-gal To-gal: Insane Clown Posse from left, Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope.

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>> STYLES OF BEYOND

Don't make any cracks about "little green men" around MC Takbir Bashir and his partner in rhyme, Ryu. The duo, who make up the Los Angeles hip-hop tag team Styles of Beyond, are like the Mulder and Scully of the West Coast rap underground. Ryu (Ryan Patrick Maginn) dabbles in Area 51 conspiracy theory, while Bashir swears he experienced two extraterrestrial "encounters" with intergalactic fireballs streaming across the L.A. sky. "I know it sounds crazy," he says, "but it opened my mind."

Styles investigate all kinds of alien contact on their gymnastic debut, 2000 *Fold*. The album—which turned indie B-kids' heads last year when it was released on Bashir's brother's label, Blatant Records—has just been reissued by the Dust Brothers' Hi-Ho label (formerly known as Nickelbag and Ideal). Conjuring up a party-rocking world of reconnaissance missions and surveillance sweeps, Styles

boast a nimble-tongued creativity trailblazed by other SoCal acts such as Freestyle Fellowship and Divine Styler. "We think on the outer limits," says Bashir.

Besides dropping crisp, quick rhymes over everything from an AOL log-on greeting to a tweaked Chic guitar loop, Styles also defend the much-maligned image of Canoga Park—their hometown in the heart of the San Fernando Valley. Best known for white-flight suburbanites, the 818 area code, and its own race of aliens—"omigod!" mall girls—the Valley hasn't exactly gotten respect for being a hip-hop mecca.

"People dis us like, 'Why are you talking about the Valley? It ain't a hard place,'" says Ryu. "We're not talking about it as a hard place. It just happens to be our place." Adds Bashir, "But just 'cause we're from the Valley doesn't mean we walk around with surfboards either." **JOHN KUN**

Wild styles: Ryu, left, and Takbir Bashir.



PHOTO: JEFF MINTON, STYLING: SCOTT FREE

Things that are unclear:

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what cats are thinking

most instructions

who started it

static

mumblers

neglected aquariums

mayonnaise

plaque

bad ventriloquists

UFO photos

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mud

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The Delgados' newest discovery? Three random kids and, behind them, from left, Stewart Henderson, Emma Pollack, Paul Savage, and Alun Woodward.

THE DELGADOS

The Delgados are not just presidents of the indie label Chemikal Underground—they're also clients. And the record company they started in 1995 has successfully launched the careers of three other critically favored Scottish guitar bands—Bis, Mogwai, and Arab Strap.

But singer/guitarist Alun Woodward, who is so laid-back it's hard to imagine him running anything, denies he and his bandmates—singer/guitarist Emma Pollack, bassist Stewart Henderson, and drummer Paul Savage—are some kind of genius talent scouts. "We just started Chemikal Underground because the prospect of getting another job was too grim," he says. "I was working in a shop. Stewart was an accountant. We wanted to work with music and not have to do any shitty jobs."

They won't have to, thanks to an unintentionally smart marketing plan that included not spending any money on marketing whatsoever. They put some of the \$30,000 they earned from the first Bis single toward recording their debut album, 1997's *Domestiques*. Then Mogwai and Bis scored in Europe and Japan, respectively, and the Delgados made a second album, *Peloton*, which sounds like the work of a Scottish Sonic Youth. Like those D.I.Y. playboys, the Delgados coat neat boy/girl vocals with washes of feedback and fuzz. But they are equally adept at writing love-lorn waltzes and delectable melodies with a little orchestral soul.

Now that Chemikal Underground has introduced four admired bands to the world, one might expect predatory major labels to come calling, as they did with Oasis's label, Creation, and Faiboz Slim's Skint. "We've never been offered anything!" says Woodward. "I'd like someone to give us loads of money...for no percent control." CRAIG MCLEAN

THE HIT LIST: THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE SOON-TO-BE UNAVOIDABLE

01 Taxiride *Imaginate* (Sire) This Australian quartet got a boost when MTV started playing the video for their "Get Set" single from the *Election* soundtrack. Of course, *Election* is an MTV production, and the video features its star Reese Witherspoon. But the four-part harmonies that make Taxiride sound like a modern-rock CSN&Y don't hurt either.

02 The Moffatts *Chapter 1: A New Beginning* (Capitol) Not a new boy band 4 U 2 lux, but honest-to-God instrument-wielding teen triplets and their older brother. Because teenage girls now control the world's economy, the Moffatts have ditched the country sound of their first two albums and tapped Alanis Svengali Glen Ballard to help reinvent them as a pop/rock group.

03 Julia Darling *Figure 8* (Wind-up) Falling somewhere near Jewel and Tori on the ethereal scale is Antipodean singer/songwriter Darling (her real name), who likes to sing about God, crinolines, and having "bulletproof belief." But she also busts out an electric guitar, a didgeridoo, and Remy Zero singer Cinjun Tate to breathe some yung into her yin.

04 LEN *You Can't Stop the Bum Rush* (Work) If '70s TV guru Sid and Marty Krofft needed a theme song for *H.R. Pufnstuf* 2000, they'd call in this Canadian crew, whose Day-Glo single "Steal My Sunshine" was featured in the movie *Go*. Its trippy hip-hop flavor is the perfect backdrop for the adventures of a young boy in bad polyester and his "magic" flute.

05 Lil' Cease *Long Time Comin'* (Queen Bee/Atlantic) The debut album from this former Junior M.A.F.I.A. member (and Notorious B.I.G. protégé) is also the first release on Lil' Kim's vanity label. It's heavy on star cameos—Puffy, Kim, Busta, and Mase all check in—but none of them makes up for the fact that Cease ain't got a whole lot to say.

06 The Push Stars *After the Party* (Capitol) You can always tell a band from Boston: the jengly guitar, the brawny beats, the melancholy male vocals. And the Push Stars, who have been kicking around Beartown for years, don't disappoint. With some high-gloss polish from Goo Goo Dollie mixer Jack Joseph-Puig, they may finally get a chance to rock Cleveland, too. TRACEY PEPPER





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(Vive el jefe!) Gary Tallent, Springsteen, Steve Van Zandt, and Patti Scialfa.

**BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN
AND THE E
STREET BAND**
PALAU ST. JOROI,
BARCELONA, SPAIN
APRIL 11, 1999

THE BOYS IN THE BAND

Bruce Springsteen never really got over his obsession with bars, cars, and guitars, but he's one of the only major male rock stars to write about growing old gracefully. John Lennon was killed when he was doing just that; Bob Dylan has been haunted by death since he was old enough to vote; and Neil Young still hangs out with punks half his age. From the moment Springsteen took that red baseball cap out of his back pocket, though, he stopped testifying about the joys of racing in the street to explore the difficulty of finding

she was shoved aside to the wings on the reunion's opening weekend so the Boss could horse around with Clemmons and guitarists Nils Lofgren and Miami Steve Van Zandt. The theme was that you can go home again, and they reinforced it with such '70s chestnuts as "Prove It All Night" and "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out."

But, unlike nostalgia acts ranging from the Rolling Stones to the Sex Pistols, Springsteen wrung meaning as well as entertainment out of the backneyed reunion-tour concert. Even at

a place to call home when you're done. Springsteen has spent more than a decade pondering adulthood—he dealt with the dissolution of his first marriage on 1987's *Tunnel of Love*, the satisfaction of settling down on 1992's *Human Touch* and *Lucky Town*, and the fallout of Newt Gingrich's Contract with America on 1995's *The Ghost of Tom Joad*. So this year's summer-long reunion tour with the E Street Band might suggest something of a midlife crisis—a fond look back at the stadium-filling glory days he shared with his buddies from down the shore. Wife and longtime backup singer Patti Scialfa had replaced Clarence Clemons as Springsteen's onstage foil during the last E Street tour (in 1989), but

When he wasn't resurrecting old stage moves (just how many guys pushing 50 can drop to their knees and immediately jump back up, anyway?), Springsteen put a new twist on some of his other old hits. Sung with Scialfa while Lofgren added textural pedal steel guitar, "Mansion on the Hill" became a comforting hallelujah of domestic bliss rather than a stark dirge of alienation from the good things in life. Later in the show, he began "Born in the U.S.A." as muddy acoustic blues before the band broke in, making the song sound both triumphant and tragic.

Springsteen pulled out all the stops for a lights-up encore of "Born to Run"—a song that seemed out of place, given the way he's outgrown the sentiments that inspired it. But he ended the night on a quieter, more honest note, with a new song called "Land of Hope and Dreams." Like the entire concert, it was about "the redemption and rebirth of our band," as Springsteen announced in English and broken Spanish. Or in other words, the "ties that bind" in a world that often tears people apart. And what else has he really ever written about? **ROBERT LEVINE**

**ASIAN DUB
FOUNDATION**
BOWERY BALLROOM,
NEW YORK CITY
APRIL 7, 1999

"Will the real British identity please stand up?" asked Asian Dub Foundation's MC Master D a few minutes into his group's set. It seemed like an absurd question coming from a group of Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Pakistanis who blend punk, dub, traditional South Asian music, and drum'n'bass on their debut, *Rafi's Revenge*—ADF's very existence challenges any attempt to pin down a British identity.

Formed in 1993, ADF are in the forefront of the global movement of young South Asian artists who embrace modern musical forms while remaining rooted in their traditional music. That movement has reached the U.S. in the form of Asian-oriented club nights such as New York's Mutiny, whose habitues—and progressive politics, in the form of an "Asians for Mumia" table—were in full effect at ADF's New York concert. But they didn't need to project an agenda onto the group: ADF are

political enough to address U.K. anti-immigrant sentiment and the shooting by New York City police of Amadou Diallo (Master D dedicated "Naxalite" to "those who are marching against police brutality in this city").

Though their politics and rhythm-fueled punk have earned them Rage Against the Machine comparisons, ADF's music is far more complex. They opened with "Charge," an anthemic punk song driven by fierce breakbeats, and later eddied dubby effects to a remarkably faithful cover of Nusrat Fete Ali Khan's "Taa Deem." Perhaps a better comparison would be Fugazi, whose disparate mix of influences also has an onstage vitality that is lacking on record. Unfortunately, ADF's strident politics aren't any more nuanced than Rage's. Instead of letting their music speak for itself, they too often wear their cultural fusion on the sleeves of their matching combat fatigues—an approach that seems less

interesting as cross-cultural pollination becomes a given instead of a novelty. It remains to be seen how much they might matter in a world where Pakistani jungle has become as common as Hawaiian pizza. **ETHAN BROWN**



Two tuned tablas and a microphone: from left, Pandit G and Sun-J.

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Kraut rocker: *Run Lola Run*'s Franka Potente.

HIT AND RUN

Say *guten tag* to Franka Potente, actress, philosopher, mercenary logger

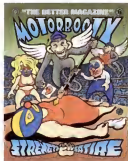
A bag of missing cash, a portly homicidal mobster, and two star-crossed young lovers caught in the crossfire: Barring the geek who becomes prom queen, it's surely the most hack movie formula of the '90s. But the stylish, breathless German movie *Run Lola Run*, as star Franka Potente puts it, "is really about what everybody thinks about: What if?" Potente plays the astonishingly energetic heroine, who has 20 minutes to hoof it across town to rescue her boyfriend and come up with 100,000 deutsche marks along the way. This scenario unfolds three times, each with copious footage of Lola running but with different outcomes, depending on what she encounters. "It's hard to talk about without sounding pathetic or mystic," says the 24-year-old Potente, "but I really believe

you can interfere with destiny just by being aware of your choices." Because the movie favors propulsive techno beats over dialogue, Potente—a German film actress who greatly prefers cigarettes to exercise—dressed down for her art. "When you're running, you can't express much," says Potente. "So showing skin and sweating seemed the best way to touch people." Apparently people were touched: *Lola* was the highest-grossing German film of '98; in the States it opened New York's prestigious New Directors/New Films festival and was one of the few standouts at this year's otherwise stale Sundance. "This movie deals with things that are to a certain extent banal, but that's good," says Potente. "Because it's the little things that often have great influence." MAUREEN CALLAHAN

NOTES ON CAMP

Photographer Martin Parr's townhouse in Bristol, England, is stocked to the rafters with kitsch—Spice Girls wallpaper, Abba soap, and other assorted bits of plastic excess. "I'm a collecting junkie," says the 47-year-old auteur. "And, like all junkies, sooner or later I have to go into a clinic—or sell something." Parr's acquisitive habits extend to his professional life as well. His coolly voyeuristic, garishly lit stills of everyday minutiae care nothing for khaki-clad good taste. Instead, Parr gives us sunbathers roasting by the shore on concrete slabs, Thatcher-era Britons taking in a crafts fair, and spilt vats of ketchup at an ocean-side chips stand. For his latest project—which was recently collected in the book *Common Sense* (D.A.P.) and will be shown simultaneously at galleries in the U.S. and Europe—Parr scouted Las Vegas, Miami, and other centers of synthetic newness to create a literally global set of tightly framed, often sardonic juxtapositions: a priapic sausage and a fishnet-stockinged mannequin leg; head stubble and cigarette butts; furry slippers and a pair of dime-store combs. Not surprisingly, there's a lot of sugar, a lot of chipped nail polish, and a lot of fashion faux pas. "Places like Japan and America are so wealthy, so over-the-top, so photogenic," says Parr, who adds that the title refers to how the photos could have been taken anywhere. "It was a pleasure to tease out aspects of conspicuous consumption and kitsch and gaudiness—all the wonderful things the First World has to offer." **ALEXANDRA LANGE**

Garish tastes that go great together: the everyday minutiae of Martin Parr's *Common Sense*.



MOTORBOOBY After a three-and-a-half-year hiatus, *Motorbooby* No. 9 has finally arrived—and already it's having its standard effect on those who don't quite agree with its brand of ruthless satire. Consider the new issue's "100 Worst Albums of the 20th Century" list, which features such sacred cows as Big Black's *Songs About Fucking*. "One guy got so enraged he just threw the magazine out the window," says Mark Dancow, who edits the Detroit-based zine with David Marline, Mike Rubin (a *Spin* senior contributing writer), and assorted others. The Insane Clown Posse may want to throw Dancow himself out a window. The issue includes both "Down With the Clowns," a comic-strip account of an ICP concert, which originally ran in *Spin*, and "Tears of the Clowns," an equally inspired sequel that documents the Clowns' efforts to exact their revenge on Dancow and Rubin. "We're trying to make it less elitist," Marline says of the magazine's broadening scope. "Before, if you didn't know who Steve Albini was, you wouldn't get a lot of the jokes. But there's plenty of other stuff to make fun of that everybody can laugh at." **G. SEATO**

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1

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Packed to the bursting point with melodies, mischief and an off-kilter old-fashioned rock and roll standard, *Marvelous 3's* He dose of exactly what today's music scene needs: unbridled power pop that simply makes you feel good. Harking back to a Cheap Trick and Queen ruled the airwaves and made no bones of their lives on stage, *Marvelous 3's* are single-handedly bring back with soaring choruses, bouncy verses, plenty of chugging guitar and an already legendary live show. Get set, go!

You'd think that the idea of country legend Bobby Bare would follow in dad's footsteps and stay true to his Nashville roots. But there's definitely a healthy dose of change in Bobby Bare Jr.'s voice, his band, Bare Jr., specializes in high-octane, high-spirited songs like "Number Better To Do" that put the alternative into y'all music. Renowned for their extreme live performances, Bare's witty, quirky lyrics and the crazed, electric duometer of Tracy Hackney, these wildmen are setting the live craze on fire with their energized, electric Americana. Though Bare Jr. might not be cut from the same country cloth as Bare Sr., their heartier, good-time music is certain to make daddy proud.



Boyz n the City
[Romantic/Epic] ★

Up
Place in The Sun
[RCA] •
273920

Delivering hooks with monster guitars and jurelful vocals, this quartet from Orange County is poised to bring not just their love of music to the charts, but also all things Vegas. That's because Rat Pack culture—vintage Cadillac and gambling play almost as big a role in Defending Lil as their musical influences. With more style than a room-temperature martini, the music crunch of Iron Monster and the funk of the Rat Pack, Weather and Elvis Costello, we'll put our money on tracks like "My Own Worst Enemy" and "Quicksand" to hit blacked every time. Front man A. Jay Popoff summarizes the band's essence with one simple statement: "We want to bring the showbar back into rock." (Once you experience the total entertainment package that is Lil, you'll agree that Defending Lil is.

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THE SPINUSERS' GUIDE TO
BROTHERS WHO MAKE MOVIES

In Hollywood, you are nobody if you don't have a brother in the biz. Unless you've dated Gwyneth. Here, a guide for those confused.

THE ZUCKER BROS.

Credits: *Airplane!*, *Police Squad!*, *Baseketball* Modus Operandi: Created their own genre of brilliant low comedy Secret Weapon: Leslie Nielsen True Fact: Zucker is their real last name Secret Weapon They would Brandish If Forced Into a Deadly Game Match With Other Hollywood Brothers: Chinese throwing stars (octagonal)

THE FARRELLY BROS.

Credits: *Dumb and Dumber*, *Kinpin*, *There's Something About Mary*, *Outside Providence* Modus Operandi: Good-natured gross-out humor Secret Weapon: Flatulence True Fact: They went to college Secret Cage Match Weapon: Club

THE HUGHES BROS.

Credits: *Menace II Society*, *Dead Presidents*, *American Pimp* Modus Operandi: Blatant movies about black people who live in the inner-city Secret Weapon: They're twins! True Fact: They know pimps Secret Cage Match Weapon: Glock

THE WACHOWSKI BROS.

Credits: *Bound*, *The Matrix* Modus Operandi: Well-executed, visually arresting movies Secret Weapon: Friends who go to comic book conventions True Fact: They made Keanu act that way on purpose Secret Cage Match Weapon: The One

THE PATE BROS.

Credits: *Deceiver* Modus Operandi: They're brothers Secret Weapon: They're cute True Fact: They're brothers Secret Cage Match Weapon: Whip

THE COEN BROS.

Credits: *Raising Arizona*, *Barton Fink*, *Miller's Crossing*, *Fargo*, *The Big Lebowski* Modus Operandi: The reigning kings of all Hollywood brothers specialize in great, weird movies Secret Weapon: John Goodman True Fact: Both have killed a man (not true) Secret Cage Match Weapon: Wheat thresher

Pie guys: right, the wonders of a foreign-exchange student; below, the wonders of prophylactics.

BROTHERS GONNA WORK IT OUT

Ever walk along a street, or by a canal, and realize you're longing for a teen sex comedy, say, the mother of all new teen sex comedies, one with a pretty good-looking ensemble cast and several enjoyable semen gags? No? What about one that uses a pastry as a masturbatory side? Intrigued? Repulsed? Intrigued and repulsed and still can't get in to see *Phantom Menace*? Take note: *American Pie*, in multiplexes this month. Think *Porky's* meets *There's Something About Mary* meets *Saved by the Bell*. But funnier.

The handiwork of the producer/director team of Chris and Paul Weitz, the latest pair of alibling auteurs to step lightly into Hollywood, the plot is so dumb and simple, well, you've probably lived it: Four desperately horny but harmless and genuinely well-meaning guys attending a modern-day American suburban high school make a pact to lose their virginity by, or on, prom night. Here's the twist: There are no twists. No retro costumes. No winking *Porky's* jokes. No Shakespeare updates.

"Yeah, it's pretty straightforward," says Paul Weitz, who is 32 and older than Chris, who is 28. "But what we really dug about the script in the first place was that while it's raunchy and at times incredibly hard-core, it has also got this central sweetness to it." More specifically: Every one gets laid.

The material is something of a departure for the brothers, whose previous gig was writing the script for last year's en-

dated Woody Allen-comedy-cum-Manist-manifesto, *Antz*. Moreover, they both attended all-boys boarding schools. "But," says Chris, "we were still friends with a bunch of retard guys desperate to get laid."

Perhaps. But Chris's boarding school was in England (where, as everyone knows, getting laid is very different), and he went to college at Cambridge (where sex is forbidden until you're in grad school). The younger Weitz was actually waiting for a posting with the Foreign Service when he sat down with his brother, until then an aspiring playwright, and penned *Legs*, a script about a porn director trying to make his first non-skin flick. That film was never made, but it led to rewrite work on such films as the nine-year-old-girl epic, *Madeline*, and *A Very Brady Sequel*.

"That's where we mastered the craft," says Chris, almost seriously.

"Definitely," says Paul. "It was kind of a big risk for a studio to even let us make *American Pie*. Even more so in light of the fact they chose a cast of relative newcomers. 'Remember, we were looking for kids who had to play virgins. We auditioned a lot of people who it was hard to imagine hadn't been laid up, down, and sideways.' But the young thespians they did cast apparently stayed true to the film's moral center. 'The set was so tame,' says Paul. 'No one got laid.' He thinks for a minute. 'Actually, maybe the extras got some action.' zev borow





01 VERN SCHILLINGER
J.K. Simmons plays the ruthless force behind the white-supremacist prisoners.

02 KAREEM SAID
Eamonn Walker as a regid and self-righteous Black Muslim activist.

03 TOBIAS BECHER
Lee Terpesen is this Oz's Dorothy: a white-shoe lawyer whose brutal welcome to prison life provides the show with its central thread.



04 AUGUSTUS HILL
Harold Perrineau, Jr., plays the show's gregarious narrator.

05 RYAN O'REILLY
Dean Cain as a conniving operator who has his fingers in all sorts of sleazy business.

06 MIGUEL ALVAREZ
Kirk Acevedo as the deposed leader of the Latino inmates.

07 LEO GLYNN

Ernie Hudson as the overburdened warden.

08 DIANE WITTELESLEY

Edie Falco as the corrections officer who lays down the law in Oz.

09 TIM McMANUS

Terry Kinney as the well-meaning but overly sanctimonious social worker.

10 SIMON ADERISI

Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje as a gleefully malicious drug smuggler.

Now entering the third year of an indefinite sentence, the HBO dramatic series *Oz* has staked out a niche as TV's most powerful show. Shining a klieg light on life behind the walls of the Oswald Maximum Security Penitentiary (or "Oz" for short) and its experimental Emerald City unit, the series offers a peek into a violent universe most viewers would never want to actually enter, not even for a conjugal visit. "I don't think *Oz* is for everybody," says Tom Fontana, the show's creator. "It's not a show that should be taken lightly. You can't be doing your laundry and cooking while *Oz* is on." With the upcoming season adding such plot developments as Russian gangsters, abortion clinic bombers, and boxing matches with dubious outcomes, here's a look behind-the-scenes at some of the key ingredients of *Oz*'s cathode wizardry. **MIKE RUBIN**

THE BIG HOUSE The show's gritty realism begins with its fully built set, which occupies more than 50,000 square feet in a former Nabisco cookie factory in New York City. Inside the day room, menacing-looking actors and extras with massive, tattooed arms loiter in a grim vault that's totally devoid of sunlight. "You feel claustrophobic," says actor Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje. "You're stuck in here with guys who do nothing but look at porno mags and arm wrestle and play cards and talk about who they fucked last night."

ORIGINAL GANGSTAS Further adding to the vérité feel are a number of ex-cons, including Chuck Zito, a Hell's Angel who plays Chuck Pancamo, muscle-bound enforcer for the Italian prisoners. "Hey," jokes Zito, who served time at several institutions, "I did six years of research for *Oz*."

ROCK THE CELLS The show also dips into the music industry for its pool of supporting players. The upcoming season includes a cameo appearance by Naughty by Nature rapper Treach, while past guest stars have included L.L. Cool J and Bichard's Evan Seinfeld. "The best thing about working on the show," says Seinfeld, who has a recurring bit part as a tattoo artist, "is that you don't ever have to shower or shave."

EYE AGAINST EYE The show's blistering intensity is typified by what *Oz* scripts call "eyefucks," smoldering, silent stare-downs between two characters. According to Terjesen, an *Oz* eyefuck is "the initial challenge. It says that I'm going to fucking kill you if I get the chance."

CAGED HEAT Despite the often barbaric behavior of the prison's male inmates—or maybe because of it—the show has developed a fanatical female following. "There were a couple of women in a video store who stopped me last year, who said, 'Oh my God, you're so great in that show,'" recalls Terjesen. "I was, like, 'Thanks,' and then I realized, 'Jesus Christ, they've seen me shit on a man's face, bite off a man's cock, all of this horrible stuff,' and I said 'I'm sorry.' But they were like, 'No, no, no, we love it.'"

FANS' NOTES Like *Star Trek* "lash" writing before it, *Oz* has inspired a considerable amount of fan fiction about the characters. A 21-and-over adult Web site, "The Smut Puppy Archives: Home of Beecher/Keller Luvin'" even features sleazy gay-oriented fiction about the relationship between inmates Beecher and Keller. "We seem to strike some chord in people," says Christopher Meloni, who portrays Keller, "maybe because we're the only relationship in the show dealing with love."

PENAL COLONY Then again, the show's breakout appeal might be due to its sculpted torsos and the occasional exposed penis. With its virtually all-male cast, *Oz* is arguably the most testosterone-fueled show in TV history. "I get to release all my angst in this character," says Akinnuoye-Agbaje. "You can't do this out on the street—otherwise you'd be [in] here."

LOST

IN OZ

L'original





The Mo' Was of gaming: Rockstar's Terry Donovan, left, and Sam Houser.

DRUGS, JUGGS AND SPEED

"My first drug experience was at age seven, sitting in my living room with Mick Jagger, smoking a spliff," says Terry Donovan, cofounder of the videogame company Rockstar Games. If the 27-year-old British

expat doesn't sound like a typical videogame exec, it may be because Rockstar isn't a typical videogame outfit. Booted up earlier this year by Donovan and his partner, Sam Houser, the New York City-based company turns out brash, giddy titles on the order of Grand Theft Auto: London 1969, an NC-17 meditation on the joys of sex, drugs, and vehicular homicide. "You're running bagfuls of speed to a Member of Parliament's hooker, and there's both female and

Rob Playford for an upcoming title, and in GTA: London '69, you might find yourself setting a moose gang afire to such ska standard as "Skinhead Moonstomp."

"We're about doing games that have relevance," says Houser. "Most games let you be Tommy the Dancing Leprechaun who slays the dragon. You can't go to the pub and say, 'Wow, I just slayed the dragon, man.' But if you say, 'I just cajoled 55 cars and ripped off drugs—that's relevant.'" **MATT DIEHL**

GIMME SOME MORE

After a game's final level has been conquered, but before developers roll out the sequel, there exists a yawning void for those who just can't-get-enough. Which explains why savvy computer game developers are increasingly milking their hits with quickie expansion sets that offer new levels, badder monsters, and other value-added tweaks. How to tell the actual upgrades from the by-the-numbers renames? Here, a look at the latest add-ons for three big sellers. **DAVID KUSHNER**

RAILROAD TYCOON II: THE SECOND CENTURY (PORTPOPC)

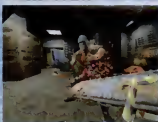


Why Last year's sequel to the breakout simulation game stopped at millennium's end. Will the train run on time post-Y2K?

What It Does Where Tycoon II was all about bare-knuckled capitalism, this mission pack traffics in richly detailed settings—you lay track into Alaska, or build a rail network through the recently drained Mediterranean basin. The most fantastical premise: Bullet trains have made it to the U.S.

Play or Nay Play. Even model train maginate Neil Young would delight in the new twenty-first-century steam engines.

QUAKE II QUAD DAMAGE (ACTIVISION/PC)



Why A few upgraded bones to placate Quake fans until the arrival of the highly touted Quake III Arena, due later this year. **What It Does** This exhaustive expansion pack, which includes the original game, offers souped-up monsters and 40 more postapocalyptic zones to kill or be killed in—the one that fills with green liquid is especially nice.

Play or Nay Nay. Quake III's designers promise an orgy of multiplayer bloodshed; why accept anything less?

STARCRIFT: BROOD WAR (BLIZZARD/PC)



Why Released last year, the beautifully constructed intergalactic strategy game remains a top seller with the multiplayer; see. The alien hordes of the Terran, Zerg, and Pylon now need new worlds to conquer.

What It Does More battle scenarios, more maps, and more creepy environments, such as a frozen wasteland. New, improved astro creeps include the Lurker, a hulking prehistoric menace that burrows underground, and the Dark Archon, which, strangely, mind-melds opponents.

Play or Nay Play. Blizzard's crack designers are too deep into the upcoming Diablo II to create Starcraft's next frontier.

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MOVIE REVIEWS

01 — LIMBO (DIRECTED BY JONAS SAYLES) The word "limbo" here is not just a title, but a kind of truth-in-advertising warning. Much of this movie will likely make mainstream audiences twitch. There are unglamorous characters: a broody middle-aged handyman, a middle-aged lounge singer who's reduced to playing Alaska, her semi-suicidal teen daughter who writes stories about freak births. There are unpredictable scene shifts: A thriller inverts the relationship-drama halfway through, then 30 minutes of Robinson Crusoe meets Stephen King. And there's the stunning cliffhanger ending: Sayles portrays his Alaska as some sort of purgatory ("It's not heaven," says one character, "and too cold to be hell"). It's a chilly, chilling place where seriously alienated people perpetually wrestle their demons. Both morbidly funny and genuinely affecting, *Limbo* is the inconsistent, indie-liberal Sayles's twelfth (and best) film. Practice makes pretty good. **B+ BOB DAVIS**



02 — THE LOVERS ON THE BRIDGE French troops storming through Paris, a Métro corridor in flames, a drunken pas de deux (music by Iggy Pop, Public Enemy, Johann Strauss, Jr.) set beneath a glorious rain of fireworks: The delicious, spectacular middle 40 minutes of *The Lovers on the Bridge* is what filmmaking is all about. The rest—a simple love affair between a sketch artist (Juliette Binoche) and a homeless addict (Denis Lavant)—may seem like a contradiction. But who cares? French visionary Léos Carax, who made his work of genius *Bad Blood* at 26, is today's greatest young director. **A- O.G.**



03 — DROP DEAD GORGEOUS *Drop Dead Gorgeous* is a dustbowl of black comedy, a "mockumentary" combining the farm-town setting of *Waiting for Guffman* with the farm-town accents of *Fargo*. The plot concerns a teenage beauty pageant in Mount Rose, Minnesota, and how important it is to the town residents. Denise Richards plays a rich, homicidal kid, bent to win at all costs. Kirsten Dunst plays a poor, nice kid who just wants to dance. One of them is immolated. There are some funny moments here, but also some heeeples retard jokes. Adam West plays himself. He steals the show. **HUGH BONAR**



04 — EXTREME Everything in *Extreme* is outsized: crushes of El Niño-fueled ocean; sheer, soaring cliffs; frosting-coated expanses of mountain. People in bright clothing—snowboarder Terje Haakonson, surfer Ken Bradshaw, and skier Francine Moreillon, among others—engage in acts of outsized stupidity, while large-format IMAX cameras, often mounted on helicopters, capture the action. Quite successfully. Viewed on a 70-foot IMAX screen, *Extreme* is simply one of the most visually impressive pieces of film ever assembled. When it's over, you'll think you can fly. **LOUIS GERALD**

FILM NOTES

✂ Though he scored cameos from Quentin Tarantino and Brad Pitt, first-time filmmaker Randolph Kret cut them both to keep it real with *Pariah*, his indie feature about a white kid who infiltrates a neo-Nazi skinhead crew that gang-raped his black girlfriend. Kret's brutally graphic film, in limited release this month, is based on actual events, and the assured, near-documentary feel helps compensate for several one-dimensional characterizations. Sadly, actor David Oren Ward—who played the skinheads' gangleader—was fatally stabbed in a road-rage incident, just weeks before the film's premiere. ✂ By far the best rumor surrounding Stanley Kubrick's hyper-scrutinized psychosexual drama *Eyes Wide Shut* (out July 16) is the one about quick-fingered Harvey Keitel getting fired for messing up Nicole Kidman's elaborate hair with his ejaculate. Other speculation: Alpha-male Tom Cruise dresses like a girl, the late Kubrick had a "sudden death" clause in his contract to prevent studio tampering; and recently porn-obsessed Goldie—who allegedly had a private audience with Kubrick—scored much of the film. ✂ *The Red Violin*, the directorial debut of Samuel L. Jackson, is a pretty good movie. It's about a violin. ✂ Even as *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* invades malls and classrooms around the country, yet another scandalous *South Park* spin-off has been screening more quietly. Trey Parker and Matt Stone's recent personal project, titled *La Pelt Package*, is very funny and very short. But includes increasingly rare footage of Matt Stone's penis, which dances. **B-**

"THE FUNNIEST BOY ON THE BLOCK"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

A full-body photograph of comedian Eddie Izzard. He is sitting on a stool, leaning forward with his hands resting on his knees. He is wearing a shiny, blue, oversized suit jacket over a patterned shirt and blue jeans. He has short, spiky reddish-brown hair and is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a solid light blue.

DRESS TO KILL EDDIE IZZARD

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CRESCENT FRESH

They interview orgasms. They smash pizza against Plexiglas. They do Hawaiian rap. How did two sock puppets become the most subversive show on TV?

There was perhaps only one course left to plot through the increasingly crowded waters of intentionally unusual television: sock puppets. Through that simple idea, Liam Lynch—who was taught music theory by Paul McCartney personally—and his childhood friend Matt Crocco created the puppet variety show/interior filler *Sift & Oily*, the most subversive and outlandish program on TV.

Since forming a band in sixth grade, Lynch and Crocco have used each others' answering machines to develop the songs and the deadpan routines that have been transferred to woolen alter egos. If somehow you haven't seen it, the two eponymous main characters ("played" by Crocco and Lynch), are socks with buttons and felt sewn to them. They mostly stand before a kaleidoscopic background and talk to each other and the camera. Along with their friends, the puppets inhabit a crazy land that's part *Mad* magazine and part Monkees outtake, having less to do with Jim Henson than with Lenny Bruce. They interview surprising "guests" (testosterone, an orgasm, the sun), conduct meandering discussions, and perform lots of strange music. Occasionally they rap.

Crocco and Lynch turn out to be gifted performers, whose blasé, reverberated voices interleave from years of experience, sounding like hallucinogenic conversations outside the frame lines of a Chuck Jones cartoon. It is a very, very, strange show, and it is often hysterical. Fans have suggested Crocco and Lynch might utilize some form of chemical creativity-enhancer. "We're actually not stoned," Crocco says. "If people could listen to our tapes from seventh grade, they'd think we were on something far more extreme."

Sift and *Oily* have a remarkable talent for exploring musical styles, flawlessly reproducing the tonality of dub, New Wave, folk, imaginary genres like "robot ballad" and "Hawaiian rap," as well as Maharishi-inspired chant music (the kind, says Lynch, that "shows up in your urine for days"). The music tends to overlay cheap Casiotone samba beats with slash guitar and shimmering vocal harmonies, as if Lou Reed had collaborated with the Brady Kids. "We love Casio," Lynch says. "The smaller they are, the better. The ones that are literally the size of calculators, and they have those little speakers in them, like those birthday cards that play songs, and they're tiny, and, like, one dollar? That's rock." The songs *Sift* and *Oily* play on the show, mostly reggae first takes, have become volume-traded MP3s on the Internet.

It's difficult to pin down exactly why all of this is so good. Withdrawn from the

real world in their "weird snow globe" of felt and drum machines, verbally creating premises and bizarre situations, the puppets turn narrative straw into gold. Watching characters without arms discuss cellular phone bills, sex techniques, and favorite cock-tails is exhilarating and oddly touching. Unlike *South Park*, *Sift & Oily* seems on its surface to have no dark agenda, no haunted desire to punish the unsuspecting. "We just want to shock you with our nonsense," says Lynch.

But beneath the show's sweetness is a stealth attack on the host network and television as a whole. When *Sift* and *Oily* execute a brief "channel change," viewers witness STV, or "Smooch Television," in which pizza and eggs are smashed against a Plexiglas sheet, accompanied by speed-metal guitar. And, later, an "image consultant" (a goateed sock puppet behind a miniature MTV desk) interrupts the broadcast in order to meddle with its content. As a "Current Ratings" bar graph appears onscreen, the consultant argues that the show's intended guest, while "cool," does not "appeal to our demographic; we need 'edgy.'" ("What if we beat him up?" *Sift* offers.) Another "channel change" reveals an ersatz "bloopers" show, in which a grinning fiend of a host goats over his prize footage: a man in a jail cell "falls on his ass," and a television anchorwoman's mild nosebleed turns into a fatal brain hemorrhage before our eyes. In the most clever segment, *Sift* and *Oily* recall "their TV roots" by unearthly archived footage of a show that inspired them in their youth, "Peto & Flek." This scratched, black-and-white kinescope tries to distill TV to its deepest core; in an extreme close-up, two round balls of foam with eyes and mouths scream lines of a demented, nearly unintelligible conversation, while a ghostly audience cheers. With "Peto & Flek," *Sift & Oily* attains the minimalist nirvana only hinted at by *The Simpsons*' "Itchy and Scratchy" or *South Park*'s "Terrance & Phillip."

For viewers looking for something beyond the sitcom, beyond talk shows and reality programming, *Sift & Oily* inspires a strange, intense sort of fascination. The members of Portishead once told Crocco and Lynch that watching *Sift & Oily* was the only thing that got them through their last album. On the Internet, "Sockheads" post stories, scripts, MP3 song files, and essays as homage to the puppets and their off-kilter, acid-trip world, while Usenet postings report on the songs' growing airplay. Of course, lots of people who stumble across the show don't really get or like it, on any level. "Some people are like, 'Hey guys, any plans to get married to some girl socks? Ha ha ha!'" says Lynch. "They can't get their heads around the fact that they're socks. They think that's the joke." Nevertheless, the show's audience is growing. When Lynch last saw Paul McCartney, "he shook my hand and said, 'How's the sock business?'" Lynch was amazed McCartney even knew about the show. "I gave him a tape. I think he watched it on his airplane."

All this attention prompts obvious questions about developing more straightforward TV or film projects, ones that might have actors, or at least animated humans. Or even starting a real band. "*Sift & Oily* is a fine venue," says Lynch. "The puppets are a good vehicle because they're not real. If it was two guys trying to seriously sell the songs, I don't know if it would be as believable or likable."

"I don't think we have any interest in being serious, doing something like *They Might Be Giants* or *Ween*," Crocco agrees. "But having an album out would be awesome," says Lynch. "That's our goal. We want to rock." JORDAN ORLANDO

THE MEMBERS OF PORTISHEAD ONCE SAID THAT *SIFT & OILY* IS THE ONLY THING THAT GOT THEM THROUGH THEIR LAST ALBUM.



Sock jocks: Sift, left, and Oily.



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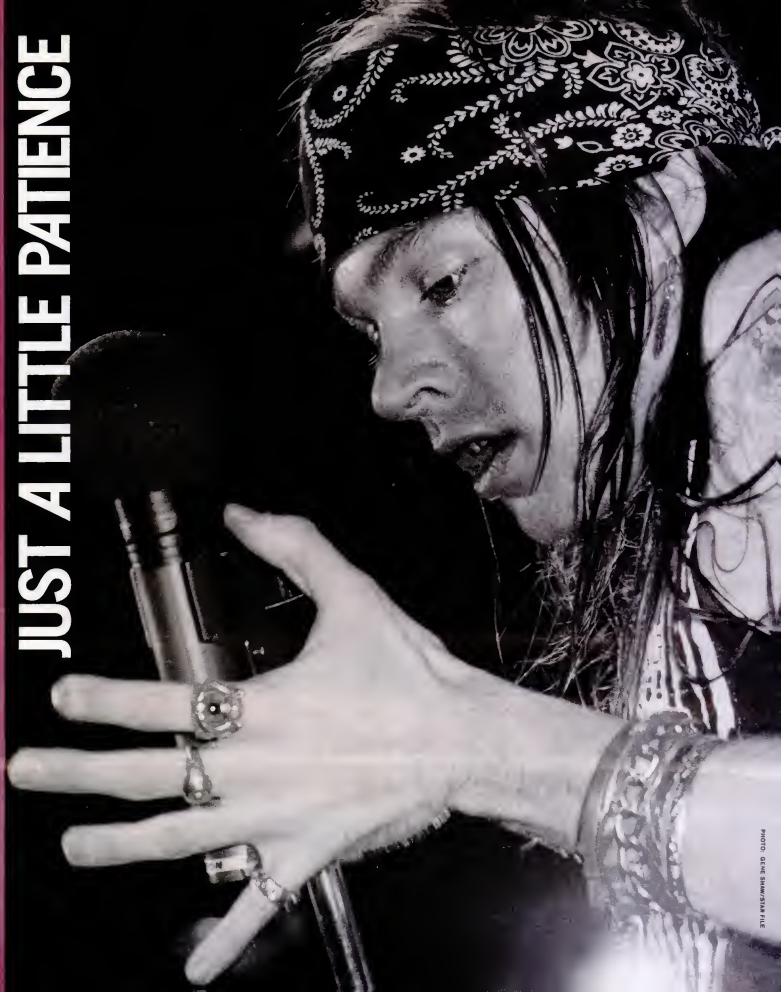
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JUST A LITTLE PATIENCE





EIGHT YEARS AGO, AXL ROSE HAD TWO ALBUMS IN THE TOP TEN AND THE WORLD AT HIS FEET. BUT RATHER THAN BURNING OUT OR FADING AWAY, HE JUST GOT UP AND LEFT. THE TRUE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED AND WHERE HE IS NOW
BY MARC SPITZ

On February 10, 1998, a 36-year-old white male with a ponytail and a reddish-blond beard was arrested for disorderly conduct at the Phoenix airport. After refusing to let airport security guards inspect his carry-on bag, the man had begun to curse at them, and was led away in handcuffs by police.

It was the first confirmed public appearance of Axl Rose in three years. It's also been the last. In 1993, Rose was one of the biggest superstars on the planet. Guns N' Roses had just finished their two-and-a-half-year world tour for the seven-time-platinum *Use Your Illusion* albums, and the band decided to take a few months off from what had become a five-year stream of arguments, drug problems, controversies, and even riots. At the end of the year, they released *"The Spaghetti Incident?"*, a collection of tossed-off punk covers designed to lida fans over until their next album. And then—other than a lackluster Rolling Stones cover for a movie soundtrack about a year later—nothing. Silence.

Like other pop music icons of the past decade—Kurt, Tupac, Biggie—Rose is frozen in our collective memory at his creative peak, a snake-hipped, out-of-control badass with a bandanna and a reputation for showing up late for his own concerts. He never got old, he never got lame, and he never got fat (though

plenty of Internet rumors would say otherwise). The longer he stays away, the larger his legend grows. Unlike Kurt, Tupac, and Biggie, though, Rose might emerge at any moment.

As the 32-year-old *Appetite for Destruction* continues to sell strongly, approaching the 16 million mark, Rose remains holed up in various Los Angeles studios recording—and trashing, rewriting, and recording again—the most anticipated comeback album of the decade. With thousands of hours of song fragments and jams on tape, he's too much the perfectionist to wrap anything up, too much the obsessive to let anything go.

For the past few months, Rose's return has seemed less of a myth and more of a real possibility. The organizers of Woodstock '99 entered ultimately unsuccessful negotiations with a reconfigured Guns N' Roses, and Rose has reportedly begun to play unfinished tracks for executives at his label. As we await the return of rock's greatest recluse, *Spin* goes in search of Axl, sorting through fact, conjecture, and some of the weirdest rumors you've ever heard (many of which—welder still—turn out to be true). Thirty-five of Rose's friends, enemies, and former associates tell the story of a small-town boy who moved to the city—and found out that the jungle really can bring you to your knees.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY AMRA BROOKS, LISA DERRICK, MARK EBNER, AND SORELLE SAIDMAN

THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH

IS ROCK'S GREATEST RECLUSE WORKING HARD, EXPERIMENTING WITH ELECTRONICA, OR HANGING OUT IN THE STUDIO WITH SHAQUILLE O'NEAL? ACTUALLY, ALL THREE. SORTING AXL'S REAL SECRETS FROM THE GNR LIES

PARADISE CITY: Sure thing

ANYTHING GOES: Even bet

YOU'RE FUCKIN' CRAZY: One in a million

AXL'S WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND

From 1984 to early 1998, various lineups of Guns N' Roses rehearsed at The Complex, a Los Angeles studio, in a 60'x40'x22' space complete with pool table, pinball machine, and, later, exercise equipment.

According to David DeVore, the studio's general manager, they worked there every weekday from about 9 P.M. to 7 A.M. When Rose decided they were ready to start recording, longtime producer Mike Clink moved them to a secure studio in the San Fernando Valley.

RATING: PARADISE CITY

AXL WILL SEE YOU NOW...

In the past five years, Rose has gone through at least three potential producers: Mike Clink, who may yet be involved in another capacity; Moby, who declined Rose's offer to produce the album; and former Killing

Joke member and Verve producer Youth. The Gunners are now working with Sean Beaven, who has produced rock and techno acts such as Nine Inch Nails and Pantera. RATING: PARADISE CITY

AXL'S A LONE GUNMAN

Rose legally owns the name Guns N' Roses, and his decision to put a band on salary may indicate he wants complete control. "It's Axl's vision now," says Duff McKagan. RATING: ANYTHING GOES

GUNS N' ROSES IS A BAND

Several producers and aidemen have walked away from the project because Rose asked them to make a long-term commitment, and some believe "hired gun" bassist Tommy Stinson could even end up with Slash-level billing. "Once Guns is up and running it may not ultimately be Axl, Axl, Axl," according to a source close to the basalt.

RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL'S UNDER PRESSURE

Rose is laboring over a song with the working title "Prostitute," according to Youth, but past successes weigh heavily on him. "They sold millions of records in a few years," says the producer. "He had a big crew of people in the studio...and I think that kind of pressure chokes creativity." RATING: PARADISE CITY

AXL'S GETTING PHYSICAL

"Axl looks like he's getting stout," says DeVore. "He's been working out, getting healthy. They're not blowing themselves out like they used to." RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL WALKS AMONG US

Rose just looks like another face in the crowd, according to Moby. "If you were walking down the street and Axl passed you, you'd never notice. He looks like a regular, decent guy."

RATING: ANYTHING GOES

INTRODUCING...AXL

To the chagrin of Guns purists—and, some say, Slash—Rose wants to join the industrial revolution. "They wanted to make a record that involved more contemporary production techniques," according to Moby. "At one point Rose

told me how much he liked the DJ Shadow record."

RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL IS A PUNK ROCKER

Never mind the bollocks—here's Guns N' Roses? Maybe. "Tommy won't play in a techno band and you can't override Josh Freeny," says a Stinson acquaintance. "These are punk rockers." RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL'S GOT GAME

At one point in April 1997, Shaquille O'Neal took a break from his own recording session in the same building and rapped over some Guns music. "I saw Guns N' Roses listed on the bulletin board in the lobby of the studio so I stuck my head in to check it out," says Shaq. "They asked me to join them, so I started freestylin' over their track. It was the first time I ever performed with a rock group, and it felt good."

RATING: PARADISE CITY

AXL'S SONG REMAINS THE SAME

The new Guns N' Roses album will be "absolutely within the same pattern of Guns N' Roses music in its diversity," says a source close to the band. Former Nine Inch Nails drum programmer Chris Vrenna, who was offered a position in Guns, agrees: "I have a feeling it's gonna be more like Appetite than people are expecting."

RATING: PARADISE CITY

AXL'S SONG REMAINS EXACTLY THE SAME

"When I walked into the studio, they were rehearsing the old songs to record for a greatest hits package," says Youth. "They were gonna do them exactly the same way. So my first project was to sort of dissuade Axl from doing that." RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL'S BEEN HERE BEFORE

Rose began consulting a "past-life regression" therapist named Suzie London in 1991. "I only went twice," says Rose's former personal assistant Colleen Combs. "She told me that I didn't have any past lives and later told Axl that I was a fifty-thousand-year-old being that put a hex on him." RATING: ANYTHING GOES

AXL WANTS TO BE STARTIN' SOMETHING

Rose "wears those Michael Jackson-type disguises—fake mustaches and Members Only jackets," says L.A. scenester Vaginal Creme Davis.

RATING: YOU'RE FUCKIN' CRAZY



USE YOUR ILLUSION DOES AXL WALK AMONG US?

• In December 1997, Axl was seen on the Universal Studios City Walk in Los Angeles with a child and an older Hispanic woman. "His hair was short," according to an eyewitness. "I think I saw Axl buy the old Grinch stuffed animal."

• A salesman at the Los Angeles audio/video outlet Voodoo Lab sold Axl a guitar effects mixer in the fall of 1997. "I'm not sure if I should mention that," he says.

• Axl was spotted buying a pair of horsehair pants at a Melrose Avenue boutique in early 1996.

• Early this year, Axl was spied at the concession stand of the AMC Century 14 Cinema in Century City, California. According to the fan who saw him, "he was wearing jeans and a flannel."

• "He was freckly, with feathered Shaun Cassidy hair," says a moviegoer who saw him earlier this year. "It was riveted by his hair. It was thick as fuck."

THE GUN CLUB

GN'R HAS INCLUDED YOUNG HOTSHOTS, OLD FRIENDS OF AXI'S, AND GUYS NAMED IZZY AND DIZZY. A BRIEF GUIDE TO LOOSE CANNONS AND HIRED GUNS



OLD GUNS

SLASH, lead guitar: In 1996, Rose sent out a press release saying he could no longer work with Slash because the guitarist had lost his "divine and find the monkey" attitude. Slash is now at work on his second album with Slash's Snakepit—"a really good band. Fortunately, I've been lucky enough to have that happen to me twice."



IZZY STRADLIN, rhythm guitar: A childhood friend of Rose's, Stradlin left Guns N' Roses in 1991 to pursue a solo career. He reunited with the band briefly in 1993 and released his second solo album in 1998.



DUFF MCKAGAN, bass: After working on new material with Rose for nearly four years while also juggling several side projects, McKagan left Guns N' Roses to start the Seattle-based punk quintet Loaded. It's "a real band," he says.



STEVEN ADLER, drums: Adler, who was fired in 1980, this year single-handedly accepted the band's Diamond Award for selling more than 10 million copies of *Appetite for Destruction*. "I haven't had that much excitement since I played with the Stones at the Coliseum," he says.



GILBY CLARKE, guitar: Stradlin's replacement, Clarke was fired by the band in early 1994. "One day my psychos stopped coming," he says. "There was no explanation—they just stopped paying me. So I pretty much took that as a hint."



HIRED GUNS

TOMMY STINSON, bass: The former Replacements bassist "hadn't worked in a long time" when Rose called, according to a source close to Stinson. "Tommy didn't get rickety one from the Replacements," the source says. "[So] he bought a used copy of *Appetite*, and learned the bass lines."



PAUL HUGER, guitar: Another childhood friend of Axl's, Huger is "the kind of guy who's always in the studio," according to temporary GN'R drum programmer Chris Vrenna. Another source says there's tension between him and Stinson because Huger "has the whole Guns attitude but he's never toured."



ROBIN FINCK, lead guitar: Finck is no stranger to the circus—Matt Sorum found him playing with Cirque Du Soleil. "I told Axl to see him and he said, 'That's our guitar player,'" says Sorum. "I said, 'Bring in Robin to play alongside Slash,' but Axl said, 'I want him to play lead.'"



JOSH FREESE, drums: A former member of SoCal punk band the Vandals, Freese is now a top session drummer. "They're paying Josh an obscene amount of money for two days of rehearsal a week," says a source close to the musician. "[But] Josh has kind of an 'I don't give a fuck' attitude about it."



DIZZY REED, keyboards: Although he's not a founding member of the band—he joined to record the *Illusion* albums—Reed is the only old-school Gunsner left. To modernize the group's sound, he's been putting together "a monstrously cool keyboard set up [with] Macintoshes and sequencing," according to Vrenna.

NINE INCH MALES

THE TRENT CONNECTION

What does Axl Rose have in common with Trent Reznor besides a large bank account and a bad case of writer's block? Actually, the reclusive pair also share a fondness for applying the latest technology to howls of pain and anger, and studio pros like drum programmer Chris Vrenna list both as references. Reznor rode the alt-rock revolution to stardom, but few know he had an unlikely, bandanna-sportin' champion from the very beginning. A brief account of W. Axl Rose's enduring fascination with the inner workings of the pretty hate machine.

LARS ULRICH: I remember late one night Axl was calling there telling me about this band called Nine Inch Nails. He was saying, "This is the coolest thing I've ever heard." And we were all sitting there going, "What the fuck are you talking about?" He had Nine Inch Nails support Guns N' Roses in Europe, and I remember hearing how they got booed off the stage. But he was there when the rest of us were still listening to fucking Judas Priest.

JOSEPH BROOKS: Several years ago, Axl told me to go shopping for CDs for him. He gave me a credit card, and I bought him stuff like Front 242, Nine Inch Nails, KMFDM, early Prodigy—all the early techno stuff. He was really excited by it.

MATT SORUM: Axl was well-versed in what was new and happening. He was the first person to play me Nine Inch Nails. He said, "They're gonna be huge."

GILBY CLARKE: Basically, Axl said, "I want to change the sound of the band. I want to use more industrial-type things." He was really into bands like Nine Inch Nails.

CHRIS VRENNA: Axl was always a big NIN fan. I was in Nine Inch Nails for ten years so I went from [playing with] Trent Reznor to Billy Corgan to Axl Rose.



Closer (than you'd think): Trent Reznor and Axl Rose have more in common than just writer's block.

• A short-haired, goateed Axl was recognized backstage at a Red Hot Chili Peppers concert in Los Angeles in April 1996.

• Axl was hanging out backstage at a Radiohead show in Los Angeles in 1997. "The thing that struck me was how unrecognizable he was," says a concertgoer. "The door guy was patting him down."

• "Not only have my friends seen him in New York City—I swear I've seen him too," says another fan. "The only thing that was different about him was his hair. It looked black or brown. But maybe it was a wig."

• Two years ago, a fan took a photo of Axl on the beach in Malibu. When she had the film developed, she says the picture came back out of focus.

APPETITE FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION

HE CAME FROM INDIANA. HE RULED L.A. HOW DID AXI ROSE GO FROM THE TOP OF THE CHARTS TO THE "WHERE ARE THEY NOW?" FILE?

MOVE TO THE CITY: 1984-1985

Born on February 6, 1962, in Lafayette, Indiana, *W. Axl Rose* is raised as *Bill Bailey*, the oldest of three children in a strict Pentecostal family that forbids him to listen to a rock music. At 17, Rose discovers that his stepdad, L. Stephen Bailey, isn't his biological father; William Rose, his real father, had walked out on the family when Axl was two. A former choirboy, Rose begins to get into trouble with the law as a teenager, mostly for public intoxication. In 1980, *Rose—who, Lafayette legend has it, took his adopted first name from the wheel axle of his skateboard—hitchhikes to Los Angeles and hooks up with Lafayette buddy Izzy Stradlin (né Jeff Isabelle).*

JIM PASDACH: Axl couldn't get a job at the mall stores because they had all caught him shoplifting—I always had to watch him when he came in. The last memory I have of him is when he came into the store and told me he was going out to L.A. to become a rock star. I was, like, "Yeah, right."

MICHELLE YOUNG: I went to high school in Los Angeles with Steven Adler and Slash—I met Axl through them. Axl was always, like, "I'm from Indiana." He would wear blue-and-white-striped Dolphin shorts, cowboy boots, and a cropped T-shirt. I'd say, "I'm not going down Melrose with you dressed like that!" He was very insecure, very naive, but he knew he had something.

TRACI GUNS: Izzy was the drummer in a band called the Babyalters. He wore a dress, and I think someone beat his ass, so he joined this band called Shire, which was a Scorpions kind of metal band. That's where I became friends with him. When Axl moved out here, Izzy and Axl ended up getting this little pad on Crescent Heights and Sunset. They put together Hollywood

Rose—first it was called A-X-L, then they were Rose, and then Hollywood Rose.

STEVEN ADLER: Slash and I were in a band called Road Crew. One day we found a flyer for a band called Rose. We said, "These guys look cool—we oughta check them out." So we went to see them at [the Sunset Strip rock club] Gazzari's and said, "We get those two in our group and we're gonna have the hottest band around." The next day I was leaving a girlfriend's house and Axl was walking up and we got to talking. We rented a studio and we were jamming on this song called "Reckless Life" and Axl grabbed the microphone and started running up and down the walls, screaming like I've never heard in my life. From the first note, I knew this was gonna be it.

MARK CANTER: When Axl hooked up with Slash, Slash joined Hollywood Rose. Living the way they did just gave them more things to write about. "Welcome to the Jungle" was the first song they wrote together, and it tells you everything.

BRETT MICHAELS: I remember going down to see them at Madame Wong's East, just me and Tommy Lee's sister and her boyfriend at the time. There were maybe 15 people in the club and Axl was playing all at he were in front of a million people.

TRACI GUNS: A bunch of people revolved in and out of Hollywood Rose—it's the way these bands are. Izzy got an offer to join this band called London, so he left. Axl ended up singing for L.A. Guns until he got in a fight with our manager. But Axl decided we should continue writing songs together since we lived together. Then we came up with the name "Guns N' Roses"—it was like, "I'm Traci Guns and you're Axl Rose." We pulled in Izzy,

who was trying to do another version of Hollywood Rose. Steven Adler was the next guy in the band—he had great hair. Duff was in some weird Top 40 band, but Izzy was like, "This guy's got short hair, but he's into the New York Dolls and stuff like that." He had a Johnny Thunders T-shirt on, and we were, like, "This guy's perfect."

STEVEN ADLER: We played our first show at the Troubadour and it was sold-out. It was like we were rock stars, but just in Hollywood.

BRENDAN MULLEN: Axl told me they wanted to be a cool underground band playing Al's Bar and the Anti-Club, but no one would give them the time of day because of their look. So they ended up playing all the Strip clubs, and they eventually just exploded.

BAMBI CONWAY: Girls wanted Axl because they could see his butt when he played with his chaps on.

TC: The first time I saw them, it was magic. I felt like I was privy to something that was gonna be taken away.

MICHELLE YOUNG: Axl used to stay over at my house a lot because he had nowhere else to go. After they got famous, there were better places to stay—and shopping. They would call and say, "I got this. I got that. I got a new car."

STEVEN ADLER: The rehearsal space we lived in on Sunset and Gardner was disgusting. No toilet, no nothing, but who cared? We didn't have jobs. We lived off girls—off strippers. We were doing what we wanted to do. We had women, and we were playing rock'n'roll.

KIM FOWLEY: You have to give them credit for cranking out all those songs in the middle of hell. I saw where they lived—it was horrible. It looked like Auschwitz.

JOSEPH BROOKS: They slept here, there, and every-

STEVEN ADLER: former drummer, Guns N' Roses

BOB AFFUSO: former drummer, Skid Row

MICHAEL BARRIERO: mixer, *Appetite for Destruction*

RODDY BOTTUM: former keyboardist, Faith No More; founder, Imperfect Teen

JOSEPH BROOKS: influential L.A. club DJ; former owner, L.A. record store Vinyl Fetish

MARK CANTER: early supporter of Guns N' Roses; owner, Canter's Deli

GILBY CLARKE: former guitarist, Guns N' Roses

COLLEEN COMBS: former personal assistant, Axl Rose

BAMBI CONWAY: former member, the Pandoras

ALICE COOPER: rock legend; restaurateur; golf enthusiast

MITCH DEAN: former drummer, punk band T.S.O.L.

ERIN EVERLY: ex-wife of Axl Rose

KIM FOWLEY: producer/manager, most famous of the Runaways; would-be Guns N' Roses manager

TRACI GUNS: founder, L.A. Guns; former guitarist, Guns N' Roses

LEMMY KILMISTER: bassist, Motörhead

MARK KOSTAB: artist; creator of the *Use Your Illusion* cover painting

BRETT MICHAELS: lead singer, Poison

MOEY: techno musician; producer

BRENDAN MULLEN: former owner, L.A. punk rock club the Masque

JIM PASDACH: owner, J. Records in Lafayette, Indiana

KEVIN QUINN: tattoo artist; guitarist, American Pearl

RIK RACKHAM: former owner, L.A. rock club The Caboose; former host, MTV's *Headbangers Ball*

VERNON REID: former guitarist, Living Colour

JOSH RICHMAN: actor; friend of Axl Rose

STEPHANIE SEYMOUR: supermodel; former girlfriend of Axl Rose

NIKKI SIXX: bassist, Mötley Crüe

BLASBY: former lead guitarist, Guns N' Roses; founder, Slash's Snakepit

MATT SORUM: former drummer, the Cult; former drummer, Guns N' Roses

TC: early friend of the band

STEVE THOMPSON: mixer, *Appetite for Destruction*

LARS ULRICH: drummer, Metallica

ROBERT WILLIAMS: painter, original *Appetite for Destruction* cover

ZAKK WYLD: former guitarist, Ozzy Osbourne's band; guitarist, Black Label Society

MICHELLE YOUNG: Slash and Steven Adler's high school classmate; inspiration for the song "My Michelle"

TOM ZUTAUT: former Geffen A&R executive who signed Guns N' Roses; copresident of the Enclave record label

01 Back Slash: "My Michelle" Young and Saul "Slash" Hudson in 1978.

02 Tattoo you: Rose in 1984.

03 Pretty in pink: Rose dances to the Tiger Beat in 1987.

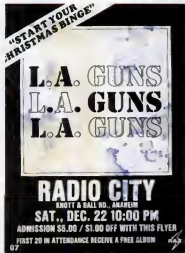
04 Poster children: Flyer for a 1986 GN'R show.

05 Well, well, well: "My Michelle," Steven Adler (right) and friends.

06 Smells like teen spirit: Rose raises his hands at a 1987 gig.

07 Young Guns: A 1985 L.A. Guns concert poster.

08 High water mark: The original handwritten lyrics to "My Michelle," which Rose scribbled on the back of that L.A. Guns poster.





PHOTOS: (9) NEAL WESTON/OUTLINE; (10) RECORD OF SONY/LONDON FEATURES; (11) CHARLES MATHIAS/STAR FILE; (12) TODD KAPLAN/STAR FILE; (13) STEVE GRANITZ/RETNA, LTD.

where. Izzy made leather-studded wristbands I sold at my record store. That's what he did for a living.

COLLEEN COMBS: When we would leave the Rainbow, Izzy would drink the remnants of all the drinks on the table.

TRACI GUNDS: [In 1985] I just wanted to get away for a week or something, and I recall Axl or Izzy calling and leaving a message—"We got rehearsal this week." I just ignored it. I didn't hear anything for a couple of days and then finally the whip came down—"Slash is going to play guitar because you haven't come to rehearsal."

L.A. booking agent Vicky Hamilton becomes the group's first manager in 1985, securing them bigger gigs and better equipment. Rose legally changes his name to W. Axl Rose.

STEVEN ADLER: Vicky was very sweet, very motherly. We were pretty much living in her house, having sex with strippers on the roof. We destroyed it.

JOSEPH BROOKS: I dragged A&R people to their gigs and played the "Welcome to the Jungle" demo on my show on [L.A. radio station] KROQ. I brought Tom Ztutaut to see Guns N' Roses and he loved them.

TOM ZTUTAUT: Joe st Vinyl Fetish was like, "There's this new band called Guns N' Rosea—you should check them out." I went to see them at the Troubadour and

the nude walk, I'm going to lose the band."

KIM FOWLEY: The day they got their check from Geffen, Axl came into The Rainbow with a Xerox of a check for \$37,500 made out to Guns N' Roses. It was half of their advance, so they must have gotten 75 grand. He said, "Look, we got our deal." I said, "Congratulations," and he said, "Buy me a drink—I don't have any money."

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE: 1986-1990

In order to build a buzz, Guns N' Roses records the EP Live ?!!? Like a Suicide for the Geffen-funded Uzi Suicide label. In August, the band hires Ztutaut-recommended manager Alan Niven (who also worked with Great White) to replace Vicky Hamilton, who later sues the band. In August, 1986, they begin recording the songs that became Appetite for Destruction.

TOM ZTUTAUT: The sessions would happen at two or three in the morning—whenever the band was inspired.

STEVEN ADLER: Most of the songs on *Appetite* are first, second, or third takes—"Sweet Child O' Mine" was only played once. I think that's why the record did so well—it was real.

SLASH: "Welcome to the Jungle" was just a riff I made sitting in my bedroom on an acoustic guitar and Axl just happened to be there. Where he got the lyrics

LARS ULRICH: I was sitting on an airplane going through a bunch of cassettes that I had flogged over at our record company, and one of them was *Appetite*. When "It's So Easy," the second song, came on, it just blew my fuckin' head off. I had never heard anything with that kind of attitude. It wasn't just what was said—it was the way Axl said it. It was so venomous. It was so fucking real and so fucking angry.

TOM ZTUTAUT: MTV was afraid that if they played GNR, local cable systems would throw them off. So *Appetite* was up to about 200,000 and it was standing still. I got called up into the president of Geffen's office and he said, "This record is over." So I went up to David Geffen's office and I said, "Could you get MTV to play the video for 'Welcome to the Jungle'?" A couple of hours later, he said, "They're going to play it at five in the morning on Sunday as a personal favor to me." Even in the wee hours of Sunday morning, MTV got so many requests that it blew their switchboard.

Guns N' Roses begin opening arena shows for Mötley Crüe and headlining small clubs with T.S.O.L. as an opener. In February 1988, Rose refuses to leave his hotel room the night of the band's Phoenix concert. Rose is fired by his bandmates, then reinstated three days later. In August—while the band is opening Aero-

"AXL BECAME VAIN, WORRYING ABOUT DYEING HIS EYEBROWS AND EYELASHES AND GOING ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR HIS HAIR AND SKIN. HE WENT ON ALL-SUSHI DIETS."

there were a lot of A&R people. So I left after two songs—I didn't need to see any more to know they were going to be the biggest band in the world. On my way out I said [to one of the other A&R people], "They suck—I'm going home," knowing full well I was going to sign them to Geffen come hell or high water.

BRENDAN MULLEN: I booked GNR at Club Lingerie. It was a chance-of-a-lifetime gig. The band set up and did a sound-check. No Axl. The band was freakin'. Then, ten minutes before set time, he strolled in. They signed with Geffen immediately after.

TOM ZTUTAUT: Axl didn't strike me as being particularly savvy or into his career. He was more like a wild animal from the African jungle. I remember Axl saying to me the Monday after the show, "Well, if you can get me a check for \$75,000 by Friday, we'll sign with you." It was unheard of. Then on Wednesday, he called me and said, "Look, man, we told the A&R person at Chrysalis that if she walked naked down Sunset Boulevard from her office to Tower Records, we'd sign with her." He was dead serious. And I remember thinking, "My office is on Sunset—I'm going to have to watch until Friday at 6 o'clock, because if she does

I really have no idea, but when we actually put the song together I think it took maybe an hour.

MICHELLE YOUNG: I'm the subject of the song "My Michelle." I was driving Axl to a gig and "Your Song" by Elton John came on the radio. I said that I wished somebody would write a beautiful song about me. But, you know the song. At the time, I didn't care because I was so fucked up, but what it says is all true: My dad does distribute porno films and my mom did die.

STEVE THOMPSON: Axl wanted some pornographic sounds in "Rocket Queen," so he brought a girl in and they had sex in the studio. We wound up recording about 30 minutes of sex noises. If you listen to the break on "Rocket Queen," it's in there.

MICHAEL BARBIERO: I didn't want to be around for recording a girl getting fucked. That wasn't the high point of my career. So I set up the mikes and had my assistant record it. If you look at the record, it says, "Vic Deglio, fucking assistant engineer." So it's literal.

Geffen Records releases Appetite for Destruction on August 1, 1987. Fearing that retailers will refuse to stock the album because of its cover—a painting by L.A.-based artist Robert Williams that seems to depict a woman whose hair has been violated by a robot—the label decides to move the image to the inner sleeve.

ROBERT WILLIAMS: When Guns N' Roses wanted to use my picture "Appetite for Destruction," I told Axl he was going to get into trouble. Then they asked if they could use the title of the painting. I said yes, but I knew there'd be a problem. None of the guys in this band were so articulate, so they would direct the media to me to defend the cover.

smith's Permanent Vacation tour—Appetite for Destruction reaches No. 1 on the Billboard album chart.

NITCH DEANE: We do our set in Phoenix, and the whole band is there except Axl, and they say, "Play that song." Then it's "Can you play two more?" By that time, we were in the middle of John Lennon's "Cold Turkey."

TOM ZTUTAUT: I cut a deal with [then Aerosmith manager] Tim Collins for the band to open for Aerosmith. He made a rule that nobody in GNR could be seen with a joint, hard drugs, or even a beer in front of Aerosmith. If Slash was caught in front of Joe Perry with a beer, they'd be thrown off the tour. So all the insanity was happening behind closed doors.

SLASH: When we were doing stadiums, it was like playing the Troubadour—I could never tell the difference. When the tour was over, I came back to L.A. and realized what a household name the band had become.

RIKI RACHTMAN: I was sitting around with Axl and I was saying, "Man, I should do that Headbangers Ball show." And Axl says, "I'll make some calls." Then he flew to New York with me for my audition. I walked in with Axl and they're, like, "You have the job."

On August 20, Guns N' Roses take a break from the Aerosmith tour to play the Monsters of Rock festival at Castle Donnington in Leicestershire, England. The general admission concert is overcrowded and the group stops playing three times in an attempt to calm the audience. As he leaves the stage, Rose tells fans to "have a good fuckin' day and don't kill yourselves"—unaware that two concertgoers were crushed to death during their set.

STEVEN ADLER: Donnington was the worst show we've

- 09 Sweet child o' mine: Rose with Erin Everly in 1990.
- 10 Jack in the box: Rose dances with Mc Daniels in 1988.
- 11 Original wrappen: The controversial first cover of *Appetite for Destruction*.
- 12 I fought the law: Rose gets arrested in Queens in 1992 for charges stemming from the St. Louis riot.
- 13 Hair club for men: Slash and Steven Adler in 1988.
- 14 Skin and bones: Rose gazes into the camera in 1990.



15

15 Only their hairdressers know for sure: Duff McKagan, Slash, Rose, Izzy Stradlin, and Steven Adler.

16 Wave that flag: Rose rocks Rio in 1991.

17 Thin white dukes: Chrissie Hynde, Jeff Beck, Slash, and David Bowie.

18 Permanent vociferator: Steven Tyler and Rose in 1983.



"WE'D SPEND \$100,000 A NIGHT ON PARTIES. ONE NIGHT WAS A GREEK NIGHT—FOUR GREASED-UP, MUSCLE-BOUND GUYS CARRIED IN A ROAST PIG. I WAS SO PISSED OFF—I LOVE PIGS."

ever played. You don't know what's happening so you can't stop it.

TOM ZUTAUT: The band was upset about it. They wondered what kind of security they had at a gig if people could be crushed.

With Appetite for Destruction at No. 3, Geffen releases GNR Lies on Nov. 30, 1988. The album consists of the Live '91 Like a Suicide EP and four acoustic tracks, including "One in a Million," which contains racist and homophobic epithets.

STEVEN ADLER: When I first heard "One in a Million," I asked Axl, "What the fuck? Is this necessary?" He just said, "Yeah, it's necessary. I'm letting my feelings out."

VERNON REID: When I heard that song, I was probably more disappointed than anything, because I liked the band. I thought the objectification was wack, like I'm somehow standing in the way of this guy.

TOM ZUTAUT: Axl resented being accused of being homophobic. He was also really pissed off about being called a racist.

TC: When they started to get money, they would drink all day at Barney's Beany. Slash bought all the snakes he wanted but they were always losing them.

SLASH: I had a walk-in room where there were four or five ten-foot pythons. I had all these little rooms in the house that were supposed to be maid's rooms, but if I had a space that didn't have any practical purpose, I'd turn it into a snake room.

COLLEEN COMBS: Axl went through a couple of cars. There was a Corvette and a red monster truck with an insane stereo system that never worked right because it would drain the battery.

MICHELLE YOUNG: Axl was changing—he and I had a falling out. I was high one night and I pushed his buttons, saying, "You're famous now and you don't need your friends." He said, "Get out of my face."

In August 1989, Stradlin is arrested for urinating in the galley on an L.A.-bound US Air flight. Along with Living Colour, Guns N' Roses are booked as an opening act for the Rolling Stones' October concerts at the Los

Angeles Coliseum, prompting critics to cast the show as a battle of the bands and speculate on whether Living Colour frontman Vernon Reid would address Rose's racism onstage.

TOM ZUTAUT: GNR had a separate area backstage. Living Colour were on the other side and the Stones were in the middle, with an army of security.

COLLEEN COMBS: Axl became more and more paranoid. He really thought someone was going to take him out. He thought someone was going to kill him.

VERNON REID: We went out with a mission—I think that was true of all three bands. I made a statement about "One in a Million" onstage, and I remember afterward Keith Richards made it a point to come over to the dressing room and shake my hand. The first show was a little weird. Onstage, Axl said [that it might be the last Guns N' Roses show because] "There are too many people in this band dancing with Mr. Brownstone." He was real pissed.

STEVEN ADLER: He said to me "Just start playing 'Brownstone.'" So I'm playing "Brownstone" and he comes out and says everybody's fucked-up on dope. He was so gone that I'm hiding there behind the drums thinking, "I don't know this guy."

On April 28, 1990, Rose marries longtime girlfriend Erin Everly, daughter of the Everly Brothers' Don Everly, at Cupid's Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas. Less than a month later, Rose threatens divorce. The couple gets back together and then splits up again, annulling the marriage in January 1991.

COLLEEN COMBS: Axl and Erin bought a house somewhere up in the Hollywood Hills after they got married.... They redesigned it, furnished it, pushed a grand piano through the French doors. They helicoptered in two topiary elephants. But they never moved in.

JOSH RICHMAN: Axl and Erin really needed to be together. This was a guy who desperately wanted a family, having come from a busted family. The annulment happened right away.

MICHELLE YOUNG: Erin would call me and say, "Axl's crazy—he's throwing things around." She pushed his

buttons, but I know that he loved her.

ERIN EVERLY (from a sworn deposition in her lawsuit against Rose for physical and mental abuse, which was later settled out of court): I was walking and he stubbed his toe behind me...and started just attacking me and telling me it was my fault that he had stubbed his toe because he was coming to tell me something.

COLLEEN COMBS: Axl became vain, worrying about dyeing his eyebrows and eyelashes and going on prescription drugs for his hair and skin. He had his teeth fixed. He went on all-shush diets.

ERIN EVERLY (from her deposition): Axl's beliefs were different than mine.... [After my dogs died] Axl believed that he had the dogs' souls transferred [into new dogs]... He said that I wasn't appreciative that he had given me the opportunity to have [our dogs] Torque and Geneva back, and that I should call [the new dogs] Torque and Geneva.

Over the course of 1990, Guns N' Roses begin work on their first follow-up to Appetite for Destruction. At the same time, drug problems begin to drive the band apart.

NIKKI SIXX: I'd been on tour, and I flew home, picked up Slash, and we went to The Cathouse and asked around about getting some smack. You always shoot yourself up—you never let anyone else shoot you up—but I was so drunk I said to the drug dealer, "Go ahead and give me it." I turned blue instantly.

STEVEN ADLER: I saved Nikki's life. I dragged him into the shower and put cold water on him. I had a broken arm and I was slapping him in the face with my cast. Then I finally got Slash's stupid girlfriend to call the paramedics. Nikki called me the next day and said, "Dude, what happened? My face is killing me."

JOSH RICHMAN: People got the impression that these guys were junkies, but Axl wasn't that way.

TOM ZUTAUT: Steven Adler would show up at the recording studio completely high. Recording sessions would abort for several days when he couldn't put it together.

STEVEN ADLER: They said the reason they threw me out of the band was because of drugs, but I thought that was

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19 Raw power: Rose and Slash in 1995.

20 Yes, Slash has no bananas: Gilly Clarke and Slash relax in 1991.

21 This year's model: Rose with Stephanie Seymour at a fashion show in 1991.

22 Someday my pants will come: Rose at the Freddie Mercury tribute concert in 1992.



20



21



22

"BY THEN, AXL HAD A SEPARATE DRESSING ROOM. WE WOULD BE READY TO PLAY. WHAT AXL WAS DOING, I HAVE NO IDEA."

the pot calling the kettle black. I was doing [drugs] with them. It hurt more than anything. They were my family.

LIVE AND LET DIE: 1990-1999

On October 30, Rose is arrested for allegedly hitting a West Hollywood neighbor over the head with a bottle after she complained about him playing music too loud. In January, the band debut new drummer Matt Sorum and new keyboardist Dizzy Reed in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, before continuing work on *Use Your Illusion*—now planned as two companion albums.

SLASH: The recording process for the *Use Your Illusion* records was one of the hardest experiences. It took so much to get us together to write the new songs or to rehearse the old ones that didn't make *Appetite*. But once we'd gotten over that hump, we went into the studio and recorded 30 songs.

MATT SORUM: There had been a four-year gap since *Appetite* came out—Lies was put out just to keep things going. We could have done anything and people would have bought it. But we recorded everything the band had ever written.

SLASH: "November Rain" was a song that was being kicked around on piano and acoustic guitar when we were doing preproduction for *Appetite*.... When we first wrote it, I think it was about 15 minutes long.

ALICE COOPER: I was staying in L.A. at the Sunset Marquis when Axl called me to do the vocal on "The Garden." When you're in the studio one-on-one with him, he's really amazing—the guy can really sing. I did my bit maybe three times, but Axl was a perfectionist—almost to the point where you want to say, "At some point, Axl, it's gotta be good enough."

MARK KOSTAB: Axl wandered into this gallery and saw the "Use Your Illusion" painting. The next day, one of his representatives called and asked if he could use it on the cover of his next record. He said that he had been writing about illusions, so it made sense.

JOSH RICHMAN: Axl said to me, "I want to make videos more out there than Michael Jackson's." When we made the "November Rain" video, he bought all these models

in. Axl desperately wanted Stephanie Seymour—period. That night they went to the set, which was being built in an airplane hanger out in the Valley. That was their first date. She left Warren Beatty the next day.

COLLEEN COMBS: Axl told me, "I've been hit by a Mack truck and the license plate said 'Seymour.'"

Expecting that the *Use Your Illusion* albums would be ready for release by summer, Guns N' Roses begin their "Get in the Ring Tour" (with Skid Row as an opening act) in late May, 1991. At Rose's "homecoming" show in Indianapolis, he compares young people there to "prisoners in Auschwitz" and is fined for performing past curfew. On July 2, Rose starts a riot at the Riverport Amphitheatre near St. Louis by leaping into the crowd to take a fan's camera; more than 50 people are injured and \$200,000 worth of damage is done to the venue. As a result, the band's next two shows are canceled.

TOM ZUTAUT: On the eve of the tour, Axl told the rest of the band that the only way he would play was if they'd give ownership of the name to him. They were looking at canceling the tour and losing millions and millions of dollars, [so] they capitulated.

ROB AFFUSO: You always wondered if Axl was going to show up onstage. Sometimes the tour manager would run out and say, "We can't find Axl—keep playing." It got to be a commonplace thing. We were like, "What's going on with this guy?"

MATT SORUM: We'd spend \$100,000 a night on parties. For two and a half years, there was something every night. One night was a Greek night—four greased-up, muscle-bound guys carried in a roast pig. I was so pissed off—I love pigs.

SLASH: If anything, the lifestyle became more of a hindrance, because we were a pretty vocal band that hadn't grown up much, [and we were] given all these opportunities to take advantage of the lavish surroundings and chicks.

MATT SORUM: We had limos on-call 24 hours, burgers at the Trump Tower that cost \$35. The first night we played Giants Stadium, there was one pinball machine and a few

bottles of booze backstage. Axl came in and said, "This isn't the Rolling Stones!" So the next night there's a full casino, tons of lobster, and champagne flowing everywhere.

After numerous delays caused by arguments over the final mix, *Use Your Illusion I* and *II* are released at the end of September. They debut in the top two spots on the Billboard album chart. Frustrated by Rose's increasingly erratic behavior, Stradlin announces that he will no longer tour with the band.

TOM ZUTAUT: The band was paying hundred of thousands of dollars in curfew violation fees. Izzy finally had it and went over to Axl's house and told him that if he insisted on going on late, the late fees should be charged to him. That was it—Izzy was out of the band.


GILBY CLARKE: I had known the guys through the early years—there was a very small contingent of people who thought bands like the New York Dolls and Hanoi Rocks were cool. When I heard Izzy was leaving, I threw my hat in the ring.

On April 20, 1992, despite objections from gay rights groups, Guns N' Roses participates in a Wembley Stadium tribute to late Queen singer Freddie Mercury, one of Rose's childhood heroes. The following month, the band—now augmented by a horn section and female back-up singers—begins the European leg of their tour, with Soundgarden and Faith No More as opening acts. **GILBY CLARKE:** The best experience I had in the band was the Freddie Mercury tribute. Axl was awesome—he really respected Freddie Mercury. We went on on time, we played great together, and everybody got along. I thought it was very moving.

RODDY BOTTUM: Opening for them was an absurd situation for a band like Faith No More. Their scene was about excess, excess, excess. There were more strippers than road crew. We weren't into that type of male bonding. The only time I saw their show was when we were reprimanded for laughing about the absurdity of the touring environment in the press and told that we'd have to apologize to Axl or leave the tour. We made an attempt to explain where we were coming from, but

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I think it went over his head because as a sort of peace offering he brought us to a trailer backstage where two naked women strippers were having sex.

KEVIN QUINN: They had been on the road for so long by this time that they brought me out for their amusement—"Let's get Kevin to fly out and tattoo us." They would give me aftershow passes to give to pretty girls, only the average age of these girls was 14 or 15. What were we gonna do with them—serve them soft drinks and thank them for coming to the show?

In an interview in an April 1992 issue of Rolling Stone, Rose says that therapy helped him recover memories of childhood sexual abuse. When he returns to America in July, Rose is arrested at New York's Kennedy Airport for assault and property damage charges relating to the St. Louis riot. The following month, the band begins a stadium tour with Metallica.

GILBY CLARKE: By then, Axl had a separate dressing room. We would be ready to play. What Axl was doing I had no idea.

JOSH RICHMAN: If there was a bad review, [manager] Doug Goldstein and I would be in the hotel stealing all the newspapers, because if Axl read it, who knows if he would get on the plane to the next city.

On August 8 at Montreal's Olympic Stadium, Metallica cut their set short after singer James Hetfield is seriously burned by onstage pyrotechnics. Rose walks offstage after 15 minutes, and more than 2,000 fans clash with police while exiting the venue, resulting in 13 injuries.

"YOU SEE THESE BANDS TODAY TALKING ABOUT THE EXCESS AND SHIT ON VH1. IT'S ALL, 'WAAH WAAH, WHINE WHINE.' IT WASN'T 'WAAH'—IT WAS A BLAST."

GILBY CLARKE: Somebody said there was a big accident and it would be really great if we could go on early. So we did. But because of all the frantic stuff, the sound wasn't together by the time we got onstage. I remember Axl coming up to me and going, "I can't hear myself." The next thing you know, he left.

LARS ULRICH: After we left, it was up to Guns to play a blinding three-hour set, but that didn't happen. And quite a few kids who were upset about it found ways to show their displeasure toward the fine facilities of Olympic Stadium. Axl's so pure or set in his own ways that if he can't go out and deliver 110 percent, he'd rather not deliver. That was the wrong night to have monitor problems.

LEMMY KILMISTER: We played with Guns N' Roses at the Rose Bowl then, and they were already fragmenting. Axl was on his own—it didn't feel like they were thinking as a band anymore.

Airedy leading with Mötley Crüe and Poison, Rose trades insults with Kurt Cobain and wife Courtney Love backstage at the 1993 MTV Video Music Awards. At the

end of the year, he disrupts a planned Christmas party at the Malibu home he shares with Seymour and allegedly physically abuses her—an incident that leads them to file lawsuits against each other.

TOM ZUTAUT: Courtney Love said something rude to Axl and it got ugly. Guns N' Roses were the ultimate rock stars and Nirvana were the ultimate anti-rock stars. It was particularly painful to Axl because he loved Nirvana's music.

STEPHANIE SEYMOUR (from her sworn declaration in connection with legal action against Rose): I had a verbal argument with Rose...[and he] announced that there would be no Christmas party.... Guests began to arrive in the late afternoon [and] at some point in the middle of the party, Rose entered the house, slammed the door, was obviously very angry, went upstairs and then came downstairs and left the house again.... [My mother] went to speak to him...[and] Rose began yelling and screaming at her and ultimately told her in no uncertain terms that she was not welcome in his house. Thereafter, most of the people at the party left.... When I attempted to talk to Rose to address the issues that had upset him,

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Rose started yelling and swearing.... He then lifted up the kitchen table, knocking off bottles and glasses. I reached for Rose in an attempt to calm him. However, he would not be consoled and he was clearly out of control.

In May of 1993, after two and a half years on the road, Guns N' Roses ends their illution tour. In December, Geffen releases "The Spaghetti Incident?", an album of punk rock covers the band had recorded during the illution sessions and on the road. Despite the group's pledge to donate the royalties to the son of one of his victims, their inclusion of a song by Charles Manson as a bonus track prompts calls for a boycott of Geffen. In 1994, at the L.A. studio The Complex, Rose experiments with updating Guns N' Roses' sound, alienating Clarke and Slash, who both record solo albums. The group records the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil" for the soundtrack to Interview with the Vampire—as of now their last released song.

GILBY CLARKE: Axl played me the Manson song, "Look at Your Game Girl," and I said, "That's pretty good." Then he told me what it was and I just went, "What?"

TOM ZUTAUT: The Manson thing was much more problematic than "One in a Million." I could never understand why that song was so important to Axl.

MATT SORUM: I had produced (techno songstress) Poe and there were drum loops in the songs, and Axl wanted that. But Slash is a rock guitarist. He doesn't want to do techno-industrial.

GILBY CLARKE: I just wanted to play guitar in a loud version of the Rolling Stones. Axl wanted to change the

direction of the band, and I was the first one dumped.

TOM ZUTAUT: Axl had a vision that GN'R should change and Slash had an attitude that Guns N' Roses was Guns N' Fucking Roses and that's who they were. I don't think they could get over their breakdown in communication. It wasn't announced publicly because nobody wanted to say the band had broken up.

SLASH: I went into the studio, and I think we got the Slash's Snakepit record together in two weeks. Once the record was finished, the GN'R hiatus was extended even longer, so I took the thing on the road, and that was that.... There's really not much to say. I'm not a person to quit anything, but it got to the point where it was a miserable experience and I had to leave.

MICHELLE YOUNG: Axl's anger had quadrupled from the person I used to hang out with. He used to be very carefree.

As various versions of Guns N' Roses continue to rehearse at The Complex, Rose is sued by Clarke for using his likeness in the band's promotional material. Over the course of 1996 and 1997, Rose briefly adds guitarist Zak Wylde, drum programmer Chris Vrenna, and former Pearl Jam drummer Dave Abbruzzese, and parts ways with Slash, Sorum, and McKagan.

MATT SORUM: Axl got metaphysical and started spending a lot of time in Sedona, Arizona. These people were taking advantage of a guy with millions to blow on lunacy.

ZAK WYLDE: Axl called me up and said, "Hey, you want to get together and do some jamming?" I'd say "Dude, did you come up with any lyrics yet?" And he'd say, "Dude, I got people suing me right now." He'd

be on the phone with his lawyers 24-7. He was, like, "I can't come up with any lyrics right now—they'd be about every other lawsuit I got going."

MOBY: Being the most successful rock star on the planet for a few years really took a psychological toll, and I think he invested a lot in his marriage and his friendships with the people in the band—and those things fell apart.

SLASH: I still play with Duff, with Matt, and with Izzy from time to time. I keep in touch with pretty much everybody. And I don't want to say that I don't miss working with Axl. I just miss working with him under the circumstances that I would consider optimum.

MATT SORUM: It got really bad. The band was going down the toilet. We grew up listening to great bands like Led Zeppelin and the Stones. Guns N' Roses made that kind of music and the lifestyle we wanted went with it—rock music, drugs, and women. You see these bands today talking about the excess and shit on VH1. It's all, "Wahh wahh, whine whine." It wasn't "wahh"—it was a blast.

Working with several other musicians and producers, Rose amasses thousands of hours of tapes with song fragments and musical ideas, none of which have been heard publicly. On February 10, 1998, he is arrested in the Phoenix airport for disorderly conduct. He has not made a public appearance since then.

Sate your appetite for deconstruction—at Spin.com on June 15—with the interview transcripts for this story.



1



STYLING: JASON FARRER THIS PAGE: NICKOLAJ ACENT BY FINA; HORN; PANTS BY MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA; GLOVES BY FINA; SHIRT AND TIE BY FINA

2

BACK TO THE LAB

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN THE BLOCK-ROCKIN' SOUND YOU INVENTED HAS BECOME THE SOUNDTRACK TO LAME TEEN FLICKS AND TAMPON COMMERCIALS? IF YOU'RE THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS, YOU BREW UP A NEW FORMULA

BY SIMON REYNOLDS

photographs by CHRIS FLOYD

Better living through chemicals:
Ed Simons, left, and Tom Rowlands of the
Chemical Brothers.

Clutching a trophy to her heaving breast, a teary-eyed Gwyneth Paltrow is paying tribute to family members who've "aunmounted insurmountable odds" to watch her baak in Oscar night glory. "It's such an odd thing to want to live your emotional life out in public, isn't it?" says Chemical Brother Ed Simona, wrinkling his nose as he glances up at the TV in Max Fish, a pseudo-seedy bar on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

Paltrow's moistly overwrought performance reminds Tom Rowlands—the tall, lanky Brother with butter-colored tresses and yellow-tinted spectacles—of the DJs' own experience with awards ceremonies. The Chemicals' *Dig Your Own Hole* was a prime contender for the 1997 Mercury Prize (Britain's hipper equivalent to the Grammys), but Roni Size/Reprazent's jungle opus *New Forms* was the surprise victor. Sitting at a table near the Reprazent crew, Rowlands quipped, "I told you we should have put some drum'n'bass on the album," while Simons's face scrunched up in a mock scowl. Unfortunately, a TV camera zoomed in for a close-up, making Simons look like the ultimate bad loser.

"At the time I didn't know it had been broadcast to millions," Simons says, looking as mortified as if it happened yesterday. "But the next morning I woke up to about 28 messages on my answer-machine.... It looked like I was pissed off, but honestly, I was pleased that a dance record got the prize."

A giggling Rowlands fantasizes aloud: "Oscar night, cut to Ed...." Simons mimes a choking-on-sour-grapes look, and his partner sputters, "See the love in those eyes!"

"[WAREHOUSE RAVING] WAS TOTAL INSANITY," SAYS ROWLANDS. "YOU'D LOOK DOWN AND SEE YOU WERE DANCING ON DEFROSTED CHICKENS."



Chaucer scholars?: rockin' London's Briston Academy in '97.

THE ANECDOTE RESONATES WITH WHAT SOME OBSERVERS CONSIDER THE Chemicals' Big Problem: their inability to comport themselves as stars (in this case, grime in defeat). Indeed, two weeks later, the duo are in South London, waiting to perform a blink-and-you'll-miss-it cameo in the video for "Hey Boy Hey Girl," the first European single off their new album, *Surrender*. Once again, they're working with Dom & Nick, the directorial team responsible for the superb "Setting Sun" and "Block Rockin' Beats" clips, which helped propel *Dig* to U.S. sales of more than 650,000. The new video is partly set in the legendary Ministry of Sound—"one of our old stumbling grounds," says Simona, imitating a bleary rare casualty. In the early '90s, he and Rowlands would go on drug-fueled club-crawls that usually ended at the Ministry, back when it was one of London's only all-night clubs.

Looning in the V.I.P. bar, the Chemicals endure a long, dreary wait while the lights are set up for the duo's ultra-brief scene. Rowlands looks like a not-very-jolly blue giant—blue shirt, flared navy-blue sailor's pants, even a blue mobile phone. Tensely pumping his left leg, Simona is wearing a short black coat with a black disarmament-symbol pin on his breast pocket—an almost imperceptible protest against NATO's recent bombing of Serbia. He peers down at a break dancer spinning on his back to the song's trancey chorus. "How much do you think he costs?" he asks.

"Two hundred fifty pounds?" guesses Rowlands.

It's not an idle inquiry—the band pays for half the cost of its videos, and this one threatens to be quite expensive. Worse, it's probably not going to get any significant exposure in America. "Hey Boy" has been deemed "too underground" for the U.S. airwaves, Simons grumbles, and so the first American radio single is "Let Forever Be," the Noel Gallagher

collaboration that everyone hopes will duplicate the breakthrough success of *Dig*'s "Setting Sun" (also cowritten and sung by the Oasis leader). Errol Koloian, general manager at the Chemicals' American label, Astralwerks, tries to reassure the duo that there are many ways to use the clip. "Oh yeah, on the Web site," Rowlands says with bitter sarcasm.

Back on the dance floor, a scarily skinny, crimson-haired gal—the latest in a series of rave babies hired to take up the slack left by the now-videogenic Chemicals—is writhing for a contender. "Needs some meat on 'er bones," says Rowlands in a gruff North-of-England accent (he's fond of putting on funny voices). At last, it's time for him to flex those dormant thespian impulses. Not that it's a demanding role, exactly—he and Simons have to climb out of a cab for a shot that will last all of four seconds. But even that may be too much screen time. Walking awkwardly toward the camera, Simons's tongue visibly bulges in his cheek.

He and his partner deserve some sympathy, though. Here's a duo whose forte is sonic thrills'n'spills, yet to get their music heard they have to negotiate a "pop process" ever more organized around the visual. The DJs don't consider it their job to live out their fans' fantasies onscreen. They're more like the drug-lab technicians their name suggests: backstage enablers who brew up the party-igniting catalysts that make crowds go crazy. "We don't really like to expose ourselves," says Rowlands. "That's one of the things we like about dance culture—compared with other music, it doesn't come with all that emotional baggage."

IN THE "HEY BOY" VIDEO, ROWLANDS CARRIES A DJ RECORD bag bearing the logo EASTERN BLOC, which comes from a Manchester record store the duo used to frequent during their student days in the early '90s. It's the Chemicals' little nod to a lost golden age, personal and pop-historical: an era when the city was rave mecca for party people across the land, and bands such as the Happy Mondays and Primal Scream led the first great wave of British indie-dance crossover. Mostly devoid of black-rockin' beats, *Surrender* pays homage to "Madchester": too. The album title is an echo of old rave slang like "Let the Music Use You," while standout track "Out of Control" is a pastiche of early New Order, cowritten and sung by that band's guitarist/vocalist Bernard Sumner.

A quest for gentler, subtler forms of exhilaration, *Surrender* chimes sweetly with the fatigued, drug-burned mood of U.K. dance culture. Clubbers are increasingly turning to the redemptive, healing sounds of neopschedelic rock bands such as Mercury Rev and Spiritualized, as they realize that quick-fix blasts of artificial energy are fine for the weekend but leave the rest of your life rather bereft. Still, the Chemicals seem to be going through a bit of a pushing-30 crisis, which is only aggravated by their involvement in rave culture: They're simultaneously nostalgic for yesterday's parties and looking for graceful ways to grow out of the party-hard mentality.

Rowlands and Simons grew up in the South of England (Oxford and London respectively). Rowlands's father is a director of commercials; Simons was raised by his lawyer mom. The duo met in a Medieval History course at the Manchester Poly University in 1989, lured as much by the excellent library as the city's reputation as a rave capital. The new friends quickly fell into a "double life"—studying Chaucer by day, clubbing almost every night of the week (somehow, they managed to graduate with honors). The fun part revolved around the club Hacienda and Eastern Bloc, which was effectively two record stores in one. "You'd go there and buy a Sub Pop seven-inch," says Rowlands, "then go next door and buy an import house angle. We saw ourselves somewhere in the cavity between the two." In a sense, they've never left it.

In '89-'90, Manchester was buzzing with house music and Ecstasy. The vice soon spread to the nearby industrial town of Blackburn, a hotbed of warehouse raves that drew 10,000 kids every weekend. "Total insanity," says Rowlands. "In the darkness, you wouldn't know what kind of

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place you were dancing in—there'd be warehouses with 10-foot drops. You'd look down and see you were dancing on defrosted chickens."

He and his friends were nicknamed the 237 Turbo Nutters, after their student house at 237 Dickenson Road. Their basement was a frequent location for dance parties, drawing a bizarre cross-section of locals, even the odd pop star. New Order's Summer turned up at their door one night looking for some action, only to be disappointed. "We followed him down the street," Rowlands says, still slightly incredulous, "and he turned 'round and said,' 'he switcha to fluent Mancunian—'Fook off, yer wuzels!'" ("wuzels" being a local insult for out-of-towners, especially students).

"Back then, I was a bit of a party head," says Summer with a faint trace of sheepishness. Clubs closed early in those days, he explains, and the still-buzzing dancers always wanted to carry on somewhere else. "But the town police chief was a real party pooper, and he was cracking down on warehouse raves. So people started having house parties, where 1,000 people might turn up."

In their last two years as students, Rowlands and Simons saw Manchester's rave dream turn into a nightmare, as drug gangs moved in and kids started overdosing the party potions. At one haunt, Most Excellent, a local gang "ramrained" the club, driving a car through the entranceway. "You couldn't get out," Simons says. "It took them an hour to remove it. The next week the gang came down and started walking around the club hitting people at random. That was when Manchester started to go sour."

One thing's for sure, though: The Chemical Brothers would not exist without their Madchester experiences. It's where they first started to DJ, at a small club called Naked Under Leather. And the era's musical sensibility—known as Balearic, after the easy-going eclecticism of DJs on Ibiza, one of the Balearic islands in the Mediterranean—continues to shape what they do as DJs and producers. "At the Hacienda, you'd get a strange mix of stuff, but it was totally natural, and that's something we've always held onto," says Rowlands.

By '94, the Dust Brothers, as they were known then, were cult DJs at the tiny London club Heavenly Social, where they conceptualized their "big idea": the fusion of hip-hop breakbeats with techno dynamics. Following the cult success in America of the Chemicals' 1995 debut, *Exit Planet Dust*, 1997's *Dig Your Own Hole* broke the *Billboard* 200 barricades (it debuted at No. 14) in preparation for an invading army of "electronica," a next-big-thing that hasn't quite happened yet. But while it failed to totally redraft the blueprint for modern-rock radio like grunge did, the Chemicals' sound has been codified, commercialized, and caned to death by countless Big Beat producers and ad agency creative directors—making Rowlands and Simons want to seek a new path.

Nowhere on *Surrender* will you find that rush-inducing breakbeat + acid-riff formula the Chemicals coined four years ago with "Chemical Beats." While hardly sedate, the album is a classic "grower"—a record that grows on you and represents, in the best sense of the word, the duo growing up. Half the album is gorgeous neo-psychedelia—the chiming, idyllic ballad "Asleep from Day," featuring Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval; the rhapsodic rush of "The Sunshine Underground"; the title track's hazy haze. The rest largely consists of pure techno and deep house. "There's nothing on this album for snowboarders," Rowlands wryly notes.

"We have gone out on a bit of a limb with this record," adds Simons, with just a hint of anxiety. "It doesn't fit with how people see us naturally."

Putting live performances and remixing on hold, the Chemicals devoted over a year to recording the album. "It was fun, but pretty difficult at times," says Simons. "We found that we were shyng so far from making energetic music that it became quite bland. We finished one version of the album and it just didn't sound right to us." The process was governed by evidences—not just of Big Beat's crass crowd-manipulating dynamics, but of the whole "bolted-together" nature of sample-collage music.

"We can really see what's good about Norman Cook's [a.k.a. Fatboy Slim] music, and Big Beat in general," says Simons diplomatically. "But there's surely going to come a time when those kind of tricks—all the drops and builds and rhythm changes—aren't going to trigger the same responses in people."

For his part, Cook has endorsed the Chemical Brothers' attempt to transcend their own formula, self-deprecatingly joking that "I'm pleased that the guys I'm ripping off are moving forwards, because that means I'll have even better ideas to steal!" *Surrender*'s new concepts include what Rowlands calls "a 'can't really see the joints' approach—less sampling, more synthesis, lots of creating sounds from scratch."

Simons talks of trying to "make a record that people cherish," of wanting "to leave people with the feeling of joy." Little clouds of cigarette smoke wisps out of the corners of his mouth as he talks, as if there's a small bonfire smoldering somewhere inside his body. Rowlands picks up the thread: "Before, the joy in our music was of a disorientating, punishing nature. Maybe this is a nicer way of achieving it—lifting you up instead of chucking you out of a cannon."

Surrender's one truly ballistic track, "Under the Influence," has been circulating as a 12-inch single under the alias Electronic Battle Weapon—an attempt to infiltrate the record boxes of punist house DJs who might normally sniff at a Chemical Brothers record. The

same rose worked with *Dig*'s monster mantra "It Doesn't Matter." Revealingly, it was the one track that many American reviewers didn't like—too monotonous and unrelenting.

Which highlights the difficulties *Surrender* may encounter in this country, where most people think house means C&C Music Factory. It's the Chemicals' obsession with sound and what it does to you that underlies both their passion for underground dance music and their abiding awe for '60s psychedelia (the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows" remains the duo's benchmark for experimental-yet-accessible music). But in America, psychedelia is far from fashionable anywhere but the indie-rock underground. And MTV and radio were wary of "electronica" last year, feeling they somehow got their fingers burned in '97.

"Electronica didn't work for us," says Skip Iley of KTEG, a Modern Rock outpost in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which is currently hyping Korn-style nu-metal. "People want tunes they can hum, words they can remember. I'm intrigued to hear the new Chemical Brothers, but I'm not foaming at the

Manchester rave on: Tom Rowlands, left, and Ed Simons.



mouth. Now if there was a new Prodigy record, I'd be doing anything I could to get hold of it."

Then again, now that Fatboy Slim's *You've Come a Long Way, Baby* has climbed into the *Billboard* Top 40, maybe the situation has already changed. A flashback to the Manchester-era classic "Loaded" by Primal Scream, Fatboy's gospel-inspired "Praise You" has that same '60s-into-'90s aura exuded by much of *Surrender*. "It has for the trail blazed by Tom and Ed, it would have been hard for [Fatboy Slim]," says Errol Klose of Astralwerks, which is also Fatboy's label. "But now he's somewhat repaid the debt, preparing the ground for *Surrender*."

BACK AT THE BAR, THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS ARE DISCUSSING their summer plans. They're scheduled to play both Woodstock 3 and Red Rocks, the vast Colorado arena where U2 recorded *Under a Blood Red Sky*. Despite their anonymous anti-image, the Chemicals thrive in this kind of mega context. "We like playing festivals," Simons says, sucking on a Marlboro Light. "When we're good, there's this manic energy buzzing from the crowd." Breaking out of his normally placid state, a slightly drunk Rowlands slips into Iggy Pop mode and grows in an attempt to convey this collective energy rush.

Unfazed, Simons continues: "That's what turned me on about raves in the first place—the communal force of people sharing something. That's when music gets magical." ■

Go to Spin.com to hear clips from the new Chemicals' joint.



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THE WONDER TWINS

ONE HALF OF CIBO MATTO IS AN AVANT-GARDE MUSICIAN WHO GOT SEAN LENNON HOOKED ON THE BEACH BOYS. THE OTHER IS A PUNK ROCK B-GIRL WHO CLAIMS SHE WAS BORN ON VENUS. TOGETHER THEY'VE MADE A DELICIOUS SLICE OF INTERNATIONAL POP

BY CHRIS NORRIS

photographs by JELLE WAGENAAR

Cibo Matto's band name is Italian for "food crazy." Right now, though, its members are in the realm of crazy food. Wandering the aisles of a Japanese supermarket in New Jersey, singer Miho Hatori and keyboardist Yuka Honda calmly inspect pickled burdock and sugared fish balls, quite unfazed by what many Garden of Eatin'ers would regard with extreme gustatory dissonance. They amble by a bin of pink mackerel spheres ("Very deep food," says Hatori), past the Wall of Squid ("Fun to eat," says Honda), and on to what must surely be the jewel in the crown of Japan's grocery empire: the snack section.

"This is soooo coooool," says Hatori, 5'1" in maroon New Balances. The sight is truly something to behold. Lyco Twin Pop, Super-Grass, Kiwi Guzzler, Sweetie Kissmint—the packages practically explode under fluorescent light. Yan Yan Dippers, Choco Babies, Kaplico Stick—fructose and corn syrup run amok. There are pancake-and-syrup-flavored cookies, and shrimp-flavored sweet potato chips. There are cartoon action figures that are, Hatori says, "detectives but they are also robots"—plus they're gum. You've never seen such high-concept, multitasking Japan, it must be said, kicks snack ass.

Honda, Yoko-fabulous in giant blue-tinted sunglasses, explains: "For some reason, each company must come up with a new product every year," she says. "So they always have these intense concepts. When tiramisu hit America, everybody loved tiramisu and that's it. When tiramisu hit Japan, suddenly there was tiramisu ice cream, tiramisu chocolate, tiramisu drinks, tiramisu chewing gum." She chuckles and adjusts her fuzzy koala bear backpack. "I think maybe they have influence on us."

Of all '90s bands, Cibo Matto are without a doubt the most likely to be influenced by the Japanese snack industry. When this duo of outer Tokyo-raised, Manhattan-dwelling hipsters first emerged in 1995, they were a cool-hunter's fantasy: two breakbeat-riding, Europop-sampling daughters of the global underground, with the taste of Beastie Boys and the spunk of riot grrrls. Their hip-hop-happy, food-obsessed debut, *Viva! La Woman*, was a genre-defining classic, perfecting the art-dweebs-and-drum-loops sound years before it entered the alt-rock mainstream. It blended '70s funk, avant-jazz horns, lo-fi noise, and super-dork rapping into an ideal music product for the forward-looking consumer: familiar flavors in a bold new delivery system. When Hatori chant-sang "I...know...my chicken," it was like tiramisu chewing gum for the ears.

But like all responsible creative directors, Cibo Matto know they can't coast on brand loyalty. So, on the new *Stereotype A* they've redefined the concept, subtly edging away from a Lower East Side beatbox aesthetic and toward a more refined international pop sensibility. "I think a lot of musicians and music critics got our first album, but not many else," says Honda. "We

wanted this one to be more for everybody. I wanted it to be something my mom can listen to as she cleans the house."

In fact, *Stereotype A* offers quite a transporting soundtrack for the plugged-in house cleaner. The record is a finer, more nuanced version of the debut's global bouillabaisse, with fewer rap shrieks and football chants, more tropicalia and '80s pop. *Stereotype* still works such pome juxtapositions as dancehall beats with Indian film music, and there are plenty of the Moog and wah-wah twitters that signify Beck-ish grooves exotica. But it also reveals a more traditional musical sophistication, one that may surprise the condescending hepcats who thought *Vive! La Woman* was a triumph of naïf chic and random-access sampling.

"People weren't sure how much it came from just chance or coincidence," says Honda, who produced *Stereotype A* and imbued it with lush four-part vocal harmonies and crafty Stevie Wonder-ish arrangements. "I think people thought I was just some girl pushing buttons." Actually, Honda was already a seasoned musician by the time she cofounded Cibo Matto. After moving to New York in 1986, she began jamming with various members of the downtown jazz scene and eventually developed a sideman résumé that runs from avant-saxophonist John Zorn to key-boardist John Medeski to the Brazilian *Tropicália* Caetano Veloso. "Yuka has totally mastered the gestures of a wide number of genres," says guitarist Marc Ribot, who plays on *Stereotype A*. "She just has a great feel. She grooves."

Hatori came to New York six years after Honda, almost immediately infiltrating the music subculture—an assimilation process that left her with an odd sort of fluency. A former record store employee who frequented American punk shows in Japan, she found her first real Manhattan connections with skateboarders—people with whom she needed few English words besides "Fugazi" to establish rapport. "I realized I could talk, you know?" she says. "We had some common language." Today, her disarming mix of functional English and stunning cultural literacy makes her claims to be the Venus-born illegitimate daughter of Sun Ra nearly credible. She'll gush about RZA and Kool Keith, name the Celtics' Red Auerbach as a favorite basketball coach, and pronounce a super-efficient Japanese cleaning product "the bomb."

Shortly after Hatori met Honda—in a punk band called LaTo Lychee—the two discovered a mutual love of P-Funk and the Boredoms, formed a sampler-rapper duo, and became the toast of Manhattan rock society. Five years later, Cibo Matto are nearly as much a New York band as the Ramones were. The hip-hop jam "Sci-Fi Wasabi" name-checks their neighborhood pizza joints and local techno DJ Moby, and the record's metaphors are less about food and more about traffic. Hatori and Honda now speak only English, even alone together. "By this record, I'd already spent a lot of time here and my whole life had changed," says Hatori. "Now I can't lean on, 'Okay, I am Japanese girl who just came from Japan.'"

Now she is a Japanese girl whose extended family includes the Beastie Boys, the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion (whose drummer, Russell Simins, played in Cibo's defunct side project Butter 08), members of Beck's band, various jazz and electronic music luminaries, film actress Claire Danes, and Yoko Ono—the last of whom Honda says "makes us proud to be black." Last year, in some asper of American assimilation, the band even performed on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. "My friends say, 'Oh my God, Buffy's deep,'" says Hatori. "So I started watch it. Girls kicking vampire. It's pretty cool."

"BY THIS RECORD, I'D
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While Hatori is dating Ben Lee bassist David Mueller, Honda shares an enormous Greenwich Village loft with a young man her band bio refers to as "Cibo Matto bassist Sean Lennon." It is he Honda credits as her band's chief heavy-metal influence. "Not many people know this about Sean," she says. "But he's a metalhead who listens to Slayer all day long." Conversely, their creative partnership colored Lennon's own shiny-happy 1998 debut, *Into the Sun*. "I actually played Sean all the Beach Boys records," Honda says. "Something happened and next thing I knew he was like, 'Brian Wilson, Brian Wilson, Brian Wilson!'"

Nearly a decade Hatori's senior, the thirty-something Honda plays the big sister role in a particularly sibling-like relationship. She protectively deflects goofball questions with light sarcasm. (What do your names mean? "Well, Miho means beautiful voice and Yuka means computer science.") And there's a sweetness running through their larger musical community that's female-centric and just a bit stoney. Hatori refers to it as "the second world."

"Every time we make music, with Sean, [drummer] Timo Ellis, and [percussionist] Duma [Love], I feel so comfortable," she says. "Almost like I'm in the mom's tummy."

But this cosmopolitan milieu initially provided comforting illusions about the openness and racial sensitivity of the rest of the United States. The title *Stereotype A* hints at the duo's resultant disillusionment. "I was shocked when we did the interviews for the America tour," Hatori says. "The questions were like, 'So, you guys like sushi?'"

Honda nods. "People find it hard to get serious about us, because we look like Japanese cartoons and we're like 'Nyeeaaah,' she says, bugging her eyes out and waving her hands around. "And it's true, that's a part of us, but not all day, 24 hours. We are very tough people and we go through a lot of friction."

Among recent travails was the paralysis of Honda's ex-husband, drummer Dougie Bowne; the death of several friends from AIDS; and the general vagaries of life as a non-cartoon person. "Miho and Yuka are very strong," says Yoko Ono, "but because of their Asian demeanor, people think, 'Oh, they're really sweet.' They are sweet, but there's also a lot of strength."

Hatori, who plays on the all-female basketball team the Varmints—along with half of Lucious Jackson and Bikini Kill singer Kathleen Hanna—discusses a recent revelation.

"Yesterday on the court, it was just boys," she says. "And it's true, men are more bigger and when they're attacking me, I sometimes want to give up. I'm pretty small, y'know?" She pauses. "But I've started to feel good about being small, because I'm fast. Incredibly."

Do she have a favorite position? Forward? Point guard?

Honda, smiling nearby, answers for her. "Winner." ■



New York women:
Yuka Honda, left,
and Miho Hatori.



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**FROM LILITH MAIDENS TO MILWAUKEE METALHEADS,
FROM MUDDY HIPPIES TO FUNKY GERMANS ON FLOATS:
26 REASONS TO STAND IN THE SWELTERING
SUN WITH THOUSANDS OF YOUR CLOSEST FRIENDS**

compiled by DAVID J. PRINCE

SUMMER MUSIC GUIDE 1999

R.E.M.

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 11;
EUROPE AND THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY: Judging by their recent workload, it could be 2003 before they tour again. In case you forgot, they have an album out.

WATCH OUT FOR: Michael Stipe has handicapped a couple of outstanding opening acts—all-country faves Wilco and psychedelic space-cadets Mercury Rev.

MORE INFO: www.wbr.com/rem

JUNE

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OZZFEST

THROUGH JULY 24;
THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY: Rob Zombie, Deftones, Slayer, and the final "Last Supper" performances of the reunited Black Sabbath. Bal heads, anyone?

WATCH OUT FOR: Mulletts, mullets, and more mullets.

MORE INFO: www.ozzfest.com

PETER D'AMICO

THROUGH AUGUST 14;
THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY: Except for ticket prices, the summer concert season hasn't changed that much since Woodstock rolled out 30 years ago. Here's a guy who isn't trying to be anything he isn't—or wasn't.

WATCH OUT FOR: There's always that small chance of ending up as part of the crowd noise on *Frampton Comes Alive 2000*.

MORE INFO: www.frampton.com

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

JUNE-SEPTEMBER;
NEW YORK CITY

WHY: It's hard to go out in New York without dropping a saw-buck, but acts like the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and the Sugar Hill Gang play Central Park for free.

WATCH OUT FOR: Don't miss local hip-hop heroes Black Star on July 17.

MORE INFO: www.summerstage.org

Thom Yorke of Radiohead



Cyndi Lauper



TIBETAN FREEDOM CONCERT

JUNE 13; CHICAGO,
AMSTERDAM, TOKYO, SYDNEY

WHY: Chicago-area performances from the Roots, Live, and the Beastie Boys. And in case you forgot—political activism is fun!

WATCH OUT FOR: In Amsterdam, an eagerly awaited solo set from Thom Yorke. In the Chicago area, a rare solo set from Eddie Vedder. In Sydney, a solo set from Neil Finn, who's big in Australia.

MORE INFO: www.milarepa.org

Ozzy Osbourne



Rob Zombie



THE VANS WARPED TOUR

JUNE 25-AUGUST 8; THE ENTIRE
U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE

WHY: The combo platter of loud music (hip-hop and nu-metal), X-treme sports (BMX, skateboarding) is a suburban wet dream—but it's also much closer to the ideal of an "alternative nation" than anything else going on this summer.

WATCH OUT FOR: Cypress Hill, Blink 182, and the Ladies Lounge—a tent devoted to women's issues.

MORE INFO: www.warpedtour.com

CHER/CYNDI LAUPER

JUNE 16-AUGUST 25;
THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY: Every generation gets the Cher it deserves. Ours is made of Eurotrash beats, crunchy vocal effects, and silicone.

WATCH OUT FOR: Cher, reinventing herself yet again; Cyndi, having no shame.

MORE INFO: www.cher.com

OSZzy Osbourne: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Radiohead: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Cyndi Lauper: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Rob Zombie: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Peter D'Amico: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Central Park SummerStage: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Tibetan Freedom Concert: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; The Vans Warped Tour: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS; Cher/Cyndi Lauper: Photo: © JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Graphic by David LaRocca

GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

JUNE 25-27, SOMERSET, ENGLAND

WHY It's the granddaddy of English festivals, a 29-year-old, independently run concert that made the reputation of bands like the Stone Roses and the Orb.

WATCH OUT FOR: The more than 100 acts on the main stages aren't even the real attraction—check out all the D.I.Y. sound systems on the 600-acre grounds.

MORE INFO:
www.glastonbury-festival.co.uk

Scott Kirkland of the Crystal Method

HOOTENANNY '99

JULY 3; IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

WHY Because it combines a top-notch rockabilly lineup with a classic-car show. Basically, *Grease* is still the word.

WATCH OUT FOR: Young Turks like Rex Hooton Heat will share a stage with old-schoolers like Bo Diddley and former X guitarist Billy Zoom.

MORE INFO:
www.hootenannyrecords.com

COMMUNITY SERVICE

JULY 4-25; THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY At least they didn't call it the Rave New World '99 tour.

WATCH OUT FOR: The Crystal Method are already a huge draw on the tour circuit—their big beats and NIN-esque stage show play well in Phoenix. Stick around for Orbital, who are touring in support of the lush, beautiful *The Middle of Nowhere*.

MORE INFO:
www.communityservicetour.com

JULY

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RAINBOW GATHERING

JUNE 28-JULY 10, SOMEWHERE IN PENNSYLVANIA

WHY If you're thinking about heading to Woodstock 3 for the camping, the communal experience, and the nudity, save your \$150 and check out this year's annual Rainbow Gathering: a free, camp-organized retreat for Deadheads, hippies, and hillbillies.

WATCH OUT FOR: Bad vibes, man. Last year, a group of anti-establishment ravers had their sound system power cord cut by a Luddite who didn't like techno in the desert.

MORE INFO:
www.welcometohome.org

LOVE PARADE

JULY 10; BERLIN

WHY Europe's annual mega-rave/youth rally draws two million people for a weekend-long techno break-out. This could be your last chance to catch this spectacle—the German government, which always threatens to cancel it, is in the process of moving back to Berlin.

WATCH OUT FOR: Although some complain about increasing commercialization (the main events are traditionally Camel-sponsored), the two-mile-long parade of sound-system floats is an over-the-top electronic Carnival.

MORE INFO:
www.loveparade.com

PHISH

JULY 17-18; VOLNEY, NEW YORK

WHY What other band has 70,000 fans dedicated enough to camp out on an airstrip for a weekend to hear multiple sets—and what other band is dedicated enough to humor them?

WATCH OUT FOR: The band's been known to surprise with late-night parking-lot jams.

MORE INFO:
www.phish.com

GO-GO'S REUNION TOUR

JULY 3-11; WEST COAST CITIES

WHY The first time this five original Go-Go's have performed together since, well, their last reunion tour.

WATCH OUT FOR: The undoubtedly forthcoming *Behind the Music* special, which might be more fun.

MORE INFO:
www.gogos.com

LILITH FAIR

JULY 8-AUGUST 31; THE ENTIRE U.S.

WHY This is the third and final Lilith tour, as Sarah McLachlan (with Sheryl Crow co-headlining) takes a victory lap before hanging up her sandals to avoid Lollapaloozan Post-Relevance Syndrome.

WATCH OUT FOR: Country-rock from the Dixie Chicks and seer soul from Me'Shell Ndege'Ocello.

MORE INFO:
www.lilithfair.com

AFRICA FÊTE

AUGUST 12–SEPTEMBER 4;
18 U.S. CITIES

WAVE Now in its seventh year, Africa Fête is as much an institution as Lollapalooza was—known for presenting Afro-pop in an American-friendly setting.

WATCH OUT FOR: This year's highlights will include Senegalese singer Baaba Maal (who shined on his own tour last winter) and a collaboration between American blues guitarist Taj Mahal and the Malian kora player Toumani Diabate.

MORE INFO:
www.africafete99.com

BUMBERSHOOT

SEPTEMBER 3–6; SEATTLE

WAVE A lineup that runs the gamut from classic punk (the Violent Femmes) to performance (Danny Hoeh). In other words: Seattle—it's not just for grunge anymore.

WATCH OUT FOR: Fresh from their very own "Where Are They Now" episode—the Tom Tom Club.

MORE INFO:
www.bumbershoot.com

SEPT

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Phish



Pavement are standing outside Madison Square Garden, shou-
dering their way through tens of thousands of burly hockey
fans. There's a sold-out game about to start—the Rangers vs.
the Mighty Ducks—and cops, peanut vendors, and entire fami-
lies in matching red-white-and-blue Rangers jerseys mill about, blocking
the sidewalk. "We've never gone to a hockey game together," says bassist
Mark Ibold. He is unceremoniously shoved aside by a squall of kids
bearing cotton candy. "Usually we go see baseball games."

Pavement pal Robert "Bingo" Bingham, a New York fiction writer,
grows increasingly nervous as they approach the arena. He bought the
band scalped tickets, an offense he's been nailed for once before.
"Should we come up with a fall-back strategy?" he says.

"Don't sweat it, Bingo," says bandleader Stephen Malkmus, still wear-
ing the track suit and squash shoes he threw on this morning while await-
ing clean laundry. The band is determined to get in, as percussionist
Bob Nastanovich has already phoned his bookie to bet on the Rangers.
"We don't much care for the Ducks," Nastanovich says.

"They're all Steve Garveys," adds the clean-cut Malkmus. Nastanovich
takes a final drag from his Marlboro, then leads the group through the
throngs to the ticket line. They cruise right in, home free—until a security
squad catches up with them moments later.

"You aren't going anywhere with those," a guard says, motioning at
the ticket stubs in Bingo's hand. "They're fakes."

"Oh, please," Bingo says. He knows they're scalped, but fakes? A bit
stunned, the band takes a look. "Well, yeah," Ibold says. "I can see that.
The printing is all faded and off-register."

"Mine looks like it was perforated with a cookie cutter," says Nas-
tanovich. Upon further inspection, they realize they all have the same seat.

Meanwhile, the Garden crowd is going ballistic: Christopher Reeve has
just been wheeled onto the ice for the opening ceremony. Security hems
and haws for a while, and finally takes a pity on Pavement. A bearded fellow
rests a cozy hand on Bingo's arm. "You tell me who you bought these
from," he says, "and if he's still out there, we'll bust the fucker."

Bingo hange his head. "I don't remember," he mutters, and ambles off.
Pavement trudge back to the street, reassuring their friend that the night
is still young. They end up viewing the game at a nearby sports bar, and
work on getting stinking drunk. Nedved is benched. Gretzky is checked.
The once formidable Rangers lose handily, 4-1. Nastanovich looks up from
his Bass Ale and shakes his head, laughing. He just lost \$100.

CAN FIVE OLD
FRIENDS LIVE IN FIVE
DIFFERENT CITIES
AND STILL BE A
BAND? YEAH, IF THEY
FIND COMMON
GROUND IN
SPORTS METAPHORS
AND BOARD
GAMES, MALE
BONDING,
PAVEMENT STYLE
BY PATTY
KRANDALL

THE KINGS OF SCRABBLE

MALKMUS AND GUITARIST SCOTT KANNBERG BEGAN PAVEMENT NEARLY
a decade ago. They dispatched their cryptic early records from the Northern
Californian auburns in small, self-financed runs, and their music crept
into the rock world like a good piece of vandalism: suddenly, anonymously,
full of challenging implications. These initial albums savored the very things
rock bands were supposed to record over, not champion—bad mixings,
first takes, studio accidents. In 1992, they released *Slanted and Enchanted*,
an indie-rock masterpiece. Soon thereafter they learned to write actual
songs, scoring a minor hit in 1994 with "Cut Your Hair." A sizable audi-
ence assembled itself, not due to record company hype or erotic allure
(although some Malkmus groupies might argue the last) but, refreshingly,
because Pavement combined musical ingredients that hadn't been blended



He sings! He juggles! Pavement, from left, Steve West,
Bob Nastanovich, Stephen Malkmus, Scott Kannberg, and Mark Ibold.

photographs by Andreas Bleckmann







1. Steve West
2. Stephen Malkmus
3. Bob Nastanovich
4. Mark Ibold
5. Scott Kannberg

well-being. Indeed, Kannberg and Malkmus grew up together, as did Nastanovich and drummer Steve West. Ibold was a pal they made in New York. Only Nastanovich, Malkmus's college friend, auditioned ("I proved I could drink 12 beers in a half-hour and still drive").

For the briefest of moments in the early '90s, everyone but Kannberg resided in one place—New York City; now only Ibold remains. West lives with his wife in a renovated antebellum mansion in Virginia, where he operates a recording studio. Kannberg, also married, owns a house in Berkeley, California, where he runs the indie label Amazing Grease. Malkmus, a part-time Oregon resident, periodically leaves home to moonlight in the Silver Jews or the Crust Brothers. Nastanovich lives in Louisville, Kentucky, across the street from the Churchill Downs racetrack. He and Malkmus co-own

a gray thoroughbred named Speedy Service, which recently beat nearly 10-to-1 odds to win its first race.

Pavement's refusal to tighten up the physical distance doomed them to persistent break-up rumors, which they insistently deny. They consider themselves

friends first, musicians second, and claim that living apart keeps their encounters fresh. "We spend less than half our lives being the band," Nastanovich says. "Nobody's willing to compromise."

By now, their recording process has adapted to the diaspora, with Malkmus kicking things off by preparing a detailed "blueprint demo." In fact, Malkmus calls their new and fifth album, *Terror Twilight*, "essentially solo stuff," as he's also responsible for a great deal of the instrumentation on the record. Meeting Malkmus in Oregon last July, the band got to know the new material through a month of rehearsals. They also aired dissatisfaction with past works, particularly the flat, tidy feel of

1997's *Brighten the Corners*.

"There wasn't much life in the performances on that record," Malkmus says. "I think the material was good but..." He winces, which he does frequently, as if dissatisfied by the quality of his thoughts. Then he gently chides West. "You're not crazy enough on the drums," he says.

Casting about for a model on which to base the new album, they settled on 1995's unruly *Wowee Zowee*. "That was a cool direction," Malkmus says. "We just needed to get it so people could understand, so it wouldn't seem so self-consciously weird." To achieve that accessibility, they brought British producer Nigel Godrich (Radiohead's *OK Computer*, Beck's *Mutations*) on board. "The things that I respond to are atmospheric," Godrich says. "I finish an album and always seem to say, 'Oh, I made *Led Zep III* again.'"

Godrich humbly downplays his *Twilight* role as being "the guy in front of them telling them to do it again," but his influence is readily apparent. There's still a loose, uninhibited feel, but the recordings also emphasize well-mixed, well-played instruments. For once, every Pavement song is played in time and sung in tune, as if the band is finally in control of

together before, and did it very well.

All the while, Pavement, eventually a quintet, continued to perform in a semi-circle, huddling onstage like a sports team going over plays. Listening closely, watching one another for cues, they looked more like intimates casually jamming than musicians intent on fiscal

the choices they're making. Not that *Terror Twilight* isn't difficult listening—the mood swings wildly as pop ballads segue into psychedelic hoodlums. The sound is alternately tender and mean, downbeat then trippy. There's always been a psychedelic component to Pavement's music, but never before has the band so totally vented their inner California hippie.

Then there are those famously inscrutable lyrics, still riddled with sports metaphors. The secondary stumbles as the cadence of the count leads them astray. The heart is ripped out of the defense. People ask for the major leagues. As always, Malkmus is more concerned with atmosphere than literal meanings. He swears he can only bear to sing the songs if he thinks from the perspective of a guy who, inebriated at a party, is saying a great many things he doesn't mean. "It's the kind of stuff that might've made sense that

"WE CAN DEFINITELY BRAG ABOUT OUR SCRABBLE," SAYS MALKMUS. "I THINK WE CAN PRETTY MUCH TAKE DOWN ANY OTHER ROCK BAND."



night, but now, when he thinks about it, he's, like, 'Gimme a break.' If anyone wants to slam the lyrics, fine with me. Just throw them in the trash."

"I always like them," Nastanovich says. "I think they're witty."

"Well, you understand my personality, so you know where they're coming from. But I'm just, like, trying to pull anything out of my ass..."

"That hasn't come out already," West finishes.

He may denigrate his lyrics, but Malkmus appears increasingly comfortable with taking credit for Pavement's musical direction. "We're in this thing where there's a songwriter/dictator who's got his vision of what a record could be, and he brings it to the band over time," he says. Oddly, none of the other members seem the least bit threatened when Malkmus speaks this way. "Pavement's always kind of just been Stephen," says Kannberg. "Well, maybe originally it wasn't. But even if he plays all the instruments, I still feel it's a Pavement song."

There ensues a moment of reflection, then Nastanovich turns and heartily congratulates Malkmus on *Terror Twilight*. "Good job, Stephen."

"I think it's good," Malkmus agrees, then winces. "I mean, don't you?"

IT'S A SUNNY AFTERNOON AT CHELSEA PIERS, A MONSTROUS MULTI-SPORT complex on Manhattan's Hudson River, and Pavement can be found on the driving range. The band stands aside as Malkmus grabs an iron, steps to the tee, and deftly hammers golf ball after golf ball into a distant net. Nastanovich whistles, impressed. "Good drive, Stephen. Real good."

Malkmus may now be Pavement's main brain, but Nastanovich is definitely the heart of the operation. He plays next-to-nothing—a little percussion, some noodling keyboards; mainly he leaps to the mic whenever a song requires a good holler—but he gives plenty in terms of "support services." Ask Pavement to imagine themselves as a basketball team, and immediately Nastanovich becomes the coach. He decides that Ibold will be the power forward. "Oh, really?" says Ibold, laughing. "Is that good?"

"Yeah, it's a typical bassist position."

Kannberg wants to come off the bench. "I think I'd be the sixth man," he says. West wonders who's bringing the ball down the court. Coach Nastanovich decides it's the drummer's job. "I'm not a very good dribbler," West says.

Nastanovich shrugs. "Westy would play center then. So make Mark the guard, I'd be the small forward, Stephen'd be the power forward, and Kannberg would play the point. You make the passes to Stephen, he shoots, and we scramble around for the rebound."

"Hmmm, well," Malkmus says. "We'd have some trouble."

After some debate, they agree that Team Pavement is best at Scrabble. Nastanovich and Ibold allege that they have repeatedly scored more than 500 points in a game, and Malkmus is no slouch, either. "We can definitely brag about our Scrabble," the singer says. "I think we can pretty much take down any other rock band." He winces and reconsiders. "Although I do have a hard time beating classical musicians." ■

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CHOICE CUTS

photographs by LIZ JOHNSON ARTUR / fashion by JASON FARRER

THIS PAGE: MAI LING WEARS STRETCH VELVET TOP BY STEPHEN SPROUSE;
JEANS BY BRUCE. HAIR BY YVONNE KAND/FIRST CHOICE, NEW YORK CITY.
OPPOSITE: FELIX WEARS WOOL V-NECK SWEATER BY Y'S FOR AREN BY YOHJI
YAMAMOTO; PANTS BY EAPORIO JR-MANI; ALL JEWELRY FROM PLANET GOLD
INC., NEW YORK CITY; HAIRCUT BY REGGAE/FIRST CHOICE, NEW YORK CITY.





THIS PAGE: ANTHONY WEARS JACKET IN SILK SCARF FABRIC BY COMME DES GARÇONS HOMME PLUS. HAIRCUT BY CASPER RODRIGUEZ/CASPER'S CUTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK.

OPPOSITE: PHIL WEARS COTTON SHIRT BY YOHJI YAMAMOTO POUR HOMME, PANTS BY ORFI; LEATHER SNEAKERS BY YOHJI YAMAMOTO POUR HOMME.





THIS PAGE: SUE WILSON'S CAMOUFLAGE KNU VEST BY ALEXANDER
MCCOY; BRACELET BY VERSACE. HAIRCUT BY REGGAE/FIRST
CHOICE, NEW YORK CITY.

OPPOSITE: NELSON WEARS T-SHIRT BY ORFI; JACKET LINER BY STONE
ISLAND; SWEATPANTS BY BLUE MARLIN; AIR FORCE ONE SNEAKERS
BY NIKE. FOR FASHION INFORMATION, SEE WHERE TO BUY.





GRAZING AT THE SERVER FARM

VAGINAL LOVE BEADS,
THE LOSER PACK,
AND A SHIRT THAT CHICKS DIG:
A THREE-DAY LAN PARTY
IS MUCH, MUCH MORE
THAN 4,320 CONTINUOUS
MINUTES OF QUAKE

BY DENNIS CASS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF MINTON

FRIDAY

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD TIFFANY BLECHA (A.K.A. MASCO) doesn't play Quake 2 or Half-Life, so the organizers of the Big Bangg, a three-day computer-gaming bacchanal in Santa Clara, California, have given her the job of "door ho." Mascot, who dates "network pimp" Chris Johnson (a.k.a. Ozy), seems bored, but she is making her own fun by pushing handfuls of square, metallic stickers on guests as they register. Each sticker features a cartoon drawing of a penguin—a logo for Linux, the underground computer operating system. Mascot insists they go on everything from monitors to soda cans to one guy's crutches. Seeing a disposable party camera sitting on the registration table, Mascot snatches it up and affixes a sticker. "Right, then," she says, affecting a slight British accent. "Now it's powered by Linux."

As door ho, Mascot has been signing people in to the Great America Ballroom of the Santa Clara Convention Center since 12 o'clock this afternoon. For \$10 per day (\$15 at the door), Big Bangg's promise to its guests is simple: a few Quake 2 tournaments and a powerful all-switch local area network (LAN) that will let them electronically blood each other without the annoying lag of the Internet. Everything else—beer, tortilla chips, computer, amusing mouse pad—is strictly bring-your-own.

About the size of a small high-school gym, the Great America Ballroom is open and raw, with fluorescent lights and carpeting the color of brown algae. Rows of conference tables are set up in three sections, like seats on an airplane. The first 30 guests are shutting in and out of the room, some taking as many as three trips to haul in their computers and related gear. "I'm glad we got good weather," says one gamer, who, as if going to a softball game, also brought a cooler and a plastic storage bin filled with snacks. "I hate it when it's raining and I have to keep my computer dry when I bring it in from the car."

As people hook up to the network, inserting their complimentary cat-5 cable into the closest hub, there is little talking and no music. The mood is professional. With all these computers on conference room tables, it looks like they're setting up to raise money for public television. Bay Area Network Gaming Group (BANGG) founder Tim Smith (a.k.a. Union Carbide), however, is already enjoying himself. Carbide, 29, is a dispatcher for a San Francisco newspaper, but he also runs the database for LANparty.com, a Web site gamers worldwide use to learn about LAN parties. "I've been doing this since anyone thought to do this," says Carbide. But instead of playing Quake, or anything else on the network, he has recruited three friends to play Mario Party on the Nintendo 64 that's set up across from Mascot.

A small crowd, their arms folded, watches the four players, who sit hunched over their game controllers as Carbide loudly jokes about what will happen to their asses when he defeats them. Nearby, 19-year-old "sponsor pimp" Blair Reynolds (a.k.a. Houston) watches, one hand in his pocket, the other holding a bullhorn with a WHO'S GOT BAWLS? sticker on its side. Houston, who's been drinking Jaegermeister since noon, is restless. His dream is to throw LAN parties for a living, and he seems a little irritated that Carbide isn't helping to welcome guests.

But Houston is a funny guy. He starts taunting the console players with the bullhorn. "Here we see the wild loser in its natural habitat," he says, mocking the smooth patter of a nature-show announcer. "Here we see them

forming in a loser pack, also known as a geek pack." Even though Houston is standing right behind the television, no one, not even the spectators, takes their eyes off the screen. The players start furiously jerking their controllers in a circle. From the waist up it looks like they're masturbating. Just then, a mother and her two teenage sons walk in, followed by a bellhop pulling a brass luggage cart stacked with computer gear.

A gamer setting up near the registration desk looks up as the family passes the spasmodic Mario party. "That can't look good," he says.

AT THE SERVER FARM—A CIRCLE OF TABLES IN THE center of the room—Ozy examines the heart of the network, a black Linux box the size of a briefcase. Surrounding him is a tangle of thin gray cords, which pile like spaghetti on the tables and spill onto the floor. Life down on the server farm is good. Because it's an all-switch network, every guest's computer receives only essential information. Unlike the Internet, where your packets swim with everyone else's, the data Ozy delivers is pure.

"We don't make money doing this," says Ozy. "We do it for the sake of gaming and because it brings people who are like us together." Like Ozy, fellow friendly server guys Andreas Tyrosvoutis (a.k.a. FatGreek) and Ryan Otis (a.k.a. Funky) know so much about computers they modify them without fear. Ozy has overclocked his Celeron 300a to perform at 464 mHz, which makes it run hot. To keep his motherboard from frying, he leaves his case open, exposing its delicate innards. A white plastic desk fan blows on the machine's green circuit boards and ribbon connectors, to cool them down. Funky keeps his case on, but has extra fans inside. "It's under room temperature in there," he says with pride. "Always."

As Ozy labors to fine-tune the network, about 75 people enjoy the fruit. A typical row of gamers has five or six players crammed in like air traffic controllers, each intently tapping keys and fringing the mouse. Most wear headphones, even though there are no noise restrictions at Big Bang, as there are at some tournaments. This is how the majority of the guests will spend the next 36 hours. If there were cubical walls, this would look a lot like work, except at work most people have more space and no one concentrates this hard.

The bodies come in two flavors here, angular and vague, but each computer looks different. Everyone decorates. Stacked on top of Union Carbide's first monitor is a second monitor adorned with a purple-tentacled monster taking a female Quake action figure from behind. Stickers cover everything. One computer has a sticker that simply reads INSANITY. Many change their screensavers and desktop wallpaper several times a day to keep them fresh. *The Matrix* is a favorite, as is *South Park*. Other popular themes include space exploration, porn, and monkeys.

At the front of the room, Houston is working up the crowd. Heather Gregg (a.k.a. Sweetmeat) has joined Mascot at the registration desk. They are two of four women here. When the lights go out, Sweetmeat says, "Isn't that romantic?"



Twitch and shout: above, "sponsor pling" Houston, left, and BANGG founder Union Carbide; left, Not_Anne and Marcus.

Houston prowls the aisles tossing out 3DNow! boxer shorts. The gamers dutifully put them on over their jeans or wrap them around their heads like turbans. "Can I get a rock?" yells Houston into the bullhorn. The crowd replies without heart. "Can I get a rock?"

he yells again. This time they respond, a chorus of hoarse yells.

"Did they say 'look'?" asks Mascot.

Sweetmeat laughs.

"Girls don't talk like that, do they?" says Mascot, pretending to be shocked.

"I do," says Sweetmeat with a shrug, but what starts to look like a promising, albeit strange, moment of female bonding quickly evaporates into a long silence.

"Do you run on Linux?" Mascot asks quietly.

"Actually I run on a proprietary hardware system," says Sweetmeat.

Mascot nods and turns her attention to a guy trying to figure out how to keep underwear on his head.

BECAUSE THERE IS NO DATA LAG HERE, THE KIND created by slow connections or heavy Internet traffic, a gamer at a LAN party can achieve the highest state of gaming consciousness, like a surfer riding a perfect wave. As one player says in a LANparty.com treatise on how to throw a LAN party, "[it's] the most fun you can have with your machine."

Quake's release in 1996 marks the LAN party's beginning. Doom, also by id software, let gamers link two computers via serial cable, but Quake was among the first to employ the idea of multiplayer, the "enjoyment of out-thinking a human opponent," as Ozy says. Pay services such as Mplayer and Heat.net flourished on the Internet, but as with any subculture, enthusiasts found a way to do it better themselves and for less. They formed clans, small teams of online players who revel in quasi-military tactics, and launched dedicated Quake servers. By the time Quake 2 came out at the end of 1997, there was a substantial network of players who had completely lost interest in computer opponents and were only satisfied if they could get it on live.

Today, new computer games are assumed to have multiplayer capabilities; the best games have an under-

ground following that supplies homemade levels and mods. A LAN party in Liverpool, England, might be for Starcraft fans only, while another in Santiago, Chile, or Sydney, Australia, might feature a night of Quake: Capture the Flag. A network for 40 people is cheap and easy to set up. Most are one-night-only, held monthly or weekly on college campuses or in hotel conference rooms. Organizers charge \$10 or \$15 to cover the bare costs of running the party.

Norway's The Gathering, which invited BANGG to be its U.S. partner this year, holds the record. In this, its eighth year, they assembled 4,000 people at the Viking Ship in Hamar, Norway, for five days of gaming on a single, incredibly massive network. The Gathering grew out of Europe's demo scene, where young programmers try to out-do one another by writing the best demo, a short, technically pure computer program that usually features pulsating graphics and techno soundtracks. The demo scene is still alive, but The Gathering is increasingly centered around the size of the network. Like other LAN party organizers, they are finding that the new frontier of gaming is wiring the population of an entire small city into a vast, playable matrix.

WHEN TRAVIS HOGUE (A.K.A. BREADTOOTH) AND JAMES Katic (a.k.a. Tetsuo) show up, the party changes. Houston had warned me about them, two veterans of Bastard's BeatDown, an exclusive LAN party down in Costa Mesa that's known as much for gaming as it is for people doing "crazy shit" like beer-bonging margaritas. Nancy Anne Nieman (a.k.a. Not_Anne) and Heather Fletcher (a.k.a. Syren), both BeatDown vets, are also supposed to come. Except for Syren, who is 23, Not_Anne, Tetsuo, and BreadTooth, like Union Carbide, are around 30, which is double the age of some gamers. Most people here seem either to be around 20 or around 30. As part of the younger set, Houston naturally looks up to the older gamers. "I want the world to see that we're parties," he says.

BreadTooth, who is 6'5", enters gabbing. He is wearing a Dr. Seuss hat. "You take a dead environment with dead people and you add one part BreadTooth," he says, pausing for dramatic effect, his eyes flaring, "and things get trippy." BreadTooth sells Internet advertising for GameSp, a company whose software acts as a match making service that hooks up Internet gamers to nearby servers. With his long curly hair, BreadTooth looks like a heavy-metal guy, like Gene Simmons with-

"WHENEVER I DRIVE HOME FROM A LAN PARTY," SAYS SYREN, "THE GUARDRAILS LOOK LIKE AMMO CLIPS. I HAVE TO KEEP FROM SWERVING TO PICK THEM UP."

out gressepaint. But he bullshits like a boat salesman.

"Chicks love this shirt," he says, pointing to the Game-Spy logo above his breast. "I was at a trade show and these women would come up to me and rub my nipple. Right here!" He rubs his nipple.

Tetsuo, who is wearing a matching hat, is a few feet away setting up his computer in one of the center section spots between the door and the server farm. Houston has marked the area RESERVED. A small crowd gathers to watch. Tetsuo has a reputation for being a wild one, the kind of person who likes to push a situation to see how hard it pushes back. His computer ready, he starts blasting out a guitar-driven MP3 that makes one of his neighbors flinch. It sounds like Pantera. Ozy steps to the edge of the server farm and tells him to turn it down. Tetsuo pauses for a moment, wondering if it's worth a confrontation. He decides it's not.

Houston clicks on the bullhorn and announces a Quake 2: Rocket Arena team tournament. Rocket Arena is a mod, a remix of Quake 2 coded by a third-party programmer. Houston instructs everyone to sign up at the front. "We're going to be Team One-Pound Cock because we've got one-pound cocks," says BreadTooth. He turns to Tetsuo and adds, "You know, some girls don't like that." He is referring to the heft of their members. Tetsuo nods.

LIKE A HOT SANTA ANA WIND, A RUMOR BLOWS through the ballroom: DeadTus and 99 Cent Value Clans are hiring a stripper. "We've made a mutual defense pact," says Carbide, not a member of either clan. "We're going to let them drink our beer, and they're going to let us look at her tits." BreadTooth and Tetsuo are game, though they're worried the two clans, who are mostly made up of 18-year-olds, don't have the tipping savvy to get a hot show. By mid-evening, small groups start drifting upstairs.

Around midnight, two rooms across from each other in the hotel have their doors wedged open, and about 30 people are flowing back and forth. BreadTooth is lounging on a crowded bed. "You've got to give Houston his props," he says. When Houston came to his first Beat-Down, says BreadTooth, he was a shy kid with no piercings. "Now look at him." Today, Houston still looks young and a little innocent, but has a long silvery fang piercing each ear. And a Prince Albert.

The stripper, named Nikki, and two hotel security guards responding to a noise complaint arrive separately but almost simultaneously. The gamers, whose reactions in Quake 2 are so fast as to be almost instinctual, balk at this real-life encounter. Neither of the security guards look very menacing—one looks like a prep-school kid in his gray pants and blue blazer—but the gamers are too paralyzed to even apologize. Tetsuo tries to finesse the situation, but security has already decided to send everyone back to their rooms.

After security leaves, about 15 gamers, mostly teenagers like Viper31 and BobbyDigital, gradually, quietly sneak into one of the rooms. They pile five to a bed, with the remaining onlookers ringing the room. After what seems like a long wait, Nikki emerges from the bathroom wearing a turquoise mini-dress and matching sports top. She has a beauty pageant smile and fake breasts that are slightly square.

Nikki climbs on the bed and straddles Houston. "Yeah, bay-bay," he says in his best Austin Powers Cockney drawl. It gets a laugh and breaks the ice. As she goes through her routine, her tape player churns through a half-hour of Marilyn Manson and Fingers-In-the-Machines.

The show is surprisingly interactive. Nikki spreads oil

on her breasts and rubs them on Viper31's naked back. She makes BobbyDigital lie face down on the floor, drizzles hot wax on his back, then pulls down his shorts. She draws a heart on his ass with permanent marker. "Have any of you guys ever seen anything like this?" she asks.

"I mean, not on a computer."

Naked, Nikki pulls a string of purple love beads out of her "toy bag." She says she needs a chair and three volunteers. Viper31 offers up his chair and Nikki takes a seat, spreading her legs and offering a black, spike-heeled shoe to a guy on each side. All pupils in the room collectively dilate. One gamer is so excited it looks like his collarbone might snap. Just as Nikki is starting to work the first bead into her vagina, the music stops. Houston alaps the tape player. With a hiccup, the song comes back on.

"That thing," says Nikki as she works in another bead. "I really should get a CD player."

"You know, you can make your own CDs," offers

disbelief, not ever imaging a LAN party could be like this.

"Good job," says Nikki. "Good job."

SATURDAY

AT HIGH NOON, THE GREAT AMERICA BALLROOM IS dark except for the glow of monitors. The gamers have been here since early this morning and by now everyone is on casino time. It could be four in the afternoon or four in the morning—no one seems to know or care. BreadTooth and Tetsuo are absorbed in a game, their headphones on, empty Heineken bottles at their feet. Behind them, most of the server guys are playing StarSiege: TRIBES, a game that requires as much strategy as twitch, while Carbide wanders around searching for three Nintendo 64 players.

Houston is hanging out with Syren, who arrived today and has set up camp with BreadTooth and Tetsuo. She's wearing a see-through turquoise top, tight black pants,

and platform thongs, and stands cradling Sneaky Snake, a ball python she brought along to keep her company. Syren was once purely a spectator but she says she's a gamer now.

"Whenever I drive home from a Beat-Down the guardrails look like ammo clips," she says. "I have to keep from swerving to pick them up." Her preface here adds an overt sexual energy. Guys look up from their computers more often when she's around, hoping perhaps to glimpse the outline of her nipples.

BreadTooth and Tetsuo wander outside for a break. While Tetsuo has a cigarette, BreadTooth tells a small crowd of smokers about Beat-Downs past. "At what other kind of party can you type 'beer me' and a girl wearing no bra and a T-shirt that says BEER GIRL will come and bring you a

beer," asks BreadTooth. "One time we even had a LAN inside a van—how cool is that?" On the drive down to one Beat-Down he, Tetsuo, Syren, and her brother Superfly drank Jaegermeister and played Quake against one another on networked laptops. BreadTooth indulged himself as heavily at Beat-Down IX that he ended up in the hospital with a migraine.

AFTER 12 STRAIGHT HOURS WITH BARELY A BREAK, a lot of people are tired, but a lot aren't. With almost every table at capacity, the party is at its peak, and while a few wander the rows of computer terminals, most of the 150 guests have turned their two-and-a-half-foot section of real estate into a snug little nest.

About six people silently gather around Carbide's dual monitors, keeping a respectful distance from each other. The air smells vaguely of pizza. On a nearby monitor a video loop of a chimp drinking his own urine



No rest for the wicked: clockwise from top left, Ozy mimes the server farm; BobbyDigital, friend of strippers; Viper31 flies helicopters and wreathes.

one helpful gamer.

"I know," says Nikki, "A guy offered to let me use his CD burner." In goes another bead. "But he wants to charge me 50 bucks."

The crowd is appalled. For people who get as much technology for free

as possible, the idea of charging someone \$50 to burn a CD is obscene. "I'll do it for free," say about three of them in unison, and a brief but detailed discussion about the various technical merits of CD burners follows. Nikki acknowledges their inherent value.

Finally, the guy kneeling in front of her pulls the beads out with his teeth. Each purple bead comes out of Nikki's vagina with a little pop, until the entire string dangles from his mouth. Viper31 and the rest are shaking their heads in





Priorities: Ignore the cheese sandwich, employ the rail gun.

The one in his bathroom is a dedicated MP3 server. In the morning Ozy simply presses the letter P on the wireless keyboard resting on his toilet tank and the computer plays his favorite loop of shower tunes.

Though Ozy is very

adroit with computers, he is neither unapproachable nor socially awkward. The server farm's ring of conference tables is physically closed off but geographically central, and Ozy and the other server guys amicably entertain questions and swap stories with guests all weekend long. The section of tables farthest from the door is the least concerned with the softer side of LAN parties, most concerned with racking kills. DeezNuts and 99 Cent Value Clan members such as BobbyDigital and Viper31 care

plays. Carbide's audience keeps their arms folded or their hands in their pockets, and the different styles of arm-folding and hand-pocketing are as individual as anowflakes, a catalog of guarded behavior. Some cross both arms evenly, fingers extended; others clench their fingers in a fist; still others holster their hands in their armpits, while a few lock their hands behind their lower back, as if viewing abstract art.

The word has spread about Carbide's collection—this is his second or third showing this weekend. A big draw of LAN parties is peering into other people's hard drives. It's rude to read files during peak times, which can cause an entire section of the network to lag, but "share up" someone's drive during off-peak times and in minutes you can copy their MP3s, movie files, bootlegged software, and, of course, their porn collection.

"Have you seen *Troops*?" says Carbide, referring to the semi-famous *Star Wars*-meets-*Cops* movie file. A few people answer with jaded "yeahs," but Carbide fires it up anyway. Then Winnie the Pooh does his morning stretches in front of the mirror as the re-dubbed voice track praises *Tasman*. And then, a take-off on the new *Star Wars* trailer, a fake preview called *Episode I: The Little Menace*, which features *South Park* characters. One of the guys watching says, "Yeah, bay-by."

Carbide shows a movie file of a woman getting hit by a computer train. The crowd groans. One kid takes his hands out of his pockets long enough to hide his laughing face. Another stands on tiptoes peering over Carbide's shoulder to see how his directory is organized.

AS THE PARTY CONTINUES, SOME GAMERS PURSUE other interests. One watches a DVD of *The Fifth Element*, while another trolls the aisles with his digital camera. DarkMonkey is juggling pins. It is hard to verbally encapsulate all that is transpiring. Few dare to try. "I'd say it looks like one hell of a geek party," says Funky from his vantage point at the server farm.

Funky is right, of course, but only partially. Even though, as one gamer points out, everyone here has spent time working tech support, the Big Bang's population is more varied than it seems. Not everyone is like Ozy, who spends more time configuring the servers and monitoring packet exchange rates than playing Quake. A nerd's nerd, Ozy studies computer science at California State University, Hayward, has a job as a network engineer for Sprint, and a collection of 13 computers at home. Five are wired as a LAN, good for small parties.

THE STRIPPER DRAWS A HEART ON BOBBYDIGITAL'S ASS WITH A PERMANENT MARKER. "HAVE ANY OF YOU GUYS EVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS?" SHE ASKS. "I MEAN NOT ON A COMPUTER."

only about dominating the other guys here. One calls himself, with impressive bravado, Anal Intruder. A high school senior from Napa Valley who also wrestles and flies helicopters, Viper31 sums up the appeal of the Big Bang as "skills and no excuses." At a LAN party, he explains, you can't blame Internet lag when you lose.

Across the sprawling ballroom, small cliques form. In many ways the room—wide and open, crowded, tables strewn—resembles a high-school cafeteria. But unlike a high-school cafeteria, where a strict pecking order dictates how people interact, the lunchroom politics at the Big Bang are more diffuse. The majority of guests fall in between Ozy and Viper31. They talk about how to maximize the frame rate of a 3D accelerator card; they sporadically yell, "Suck it, bitch!" Hysterical parents and Congressional hopefuls would be disappointed at how peaceful the Quake-obsessed gamers are. Many seem to come not just for the gaming but for the physical contact the Internet precludes. Syren, who is currently studying to be a dental assistant, first got into computers as a way to "bond" with her dad and brother. Now she loves the attention she gets at LAN parties. "I want to be the chick who's hot and knows more than you," she says. Her snake and see-through top make for compelling arguments.

Most attendees are similarly theatrical if less physically expressive, preferring to crib lines from *The Simpsons* or *Austin Powers*. Accents abound; Cockney is preferred. (Q: "Sir is it your hard drive?" A: "Don't rightly

know.") Still others love the thrill of yelling "fuck" in a crowded room. Everyone seems to crave attention.

Some more than others. BreadTooth and Tetsuo, while at times condescending of the others present, care enough about their images to be disappointed that no one at the Big Bang reveals their antics. They sit at the cool table—center section, first set of tables, in between the door and the server farm—but even with their large hats, they somehow fail to achieve a critical mass of trippiness. "There are too many arrogant people who just want to look people's ass," says BreadTooth, explaining the shortcomings of this crowd. Tetsuo simply calls the party "lame." The winners and the server guys are too preoccupied to give them the time of day. The rest are equally self-contained. Saturday night, BreadTooth and Tetsuo spend most of the evening sulking at the hotel bar, surrendering the lead to whoever wants it most, which turns out to be no one. People here actually just want to play.

SUNDAY

HOUSTON MAY BE EXHAUSTED, BUT, EVER THE IMPRESARIO, he plays to the small crowd gathered behind him. Mascot, who had disappeared for a while, is back hanging out at the server farm with Ozy, who finally has some time to play Tetsuo and Syren left the night before, but BreadTooth, NotAnne, and Sweetmeat are all milling around. Many of the attendees have gone home. "His penis is 3D-accelerated," says one gamer who still hasn't had enough, though it's unclear whose penis is so futur-

istic. Union Carbide looks very happy, having found a steady supply of console players, who are clustered by the front door waiting their turn.

"Nobody owns me when I've got the railgun," says Houston, craning his neck to see who is still watching. Next door at Exhibit Hall B, the service of the Abundant Life Ministry is letting out, and an African-American couple with their baby pause at the doorway. They are a picture of sober reverence—he in a crisp, black suit, she a pastel floral-print dress; the baby in little lacy socks—and they are visibly confused. The father stops Ozy and politely asks him what's going on. Ozy hesitates. "It's kind of a computer gaming convention," he says. The wife takes her baby on a quick stroll down the aisles, past bleary-eyed teens, tangled network cables, soda-can monuments, and the remnants of a doughnut and Doritos breakfast. When she returns to her husband, he gives her a questioning look. All she can do is shrug.

Houston watches the wholesome visitors leave. He savors their reaction. "All right, let's get on up all these monitors," he says, pointing to the row of computers that face the entrance. "We need a porn server." His audience is exhausted by now, but how can they not smile? Over by the door, a Mario Party game is in full swing. Carbide is playfully browbeating his opponents. The spectators' arms are folded. A pizza is on its way. Everyone present has seen this screen a hundred times this weekend, but Carbide keeps them lively with butt jokes. He puts on a pretty good show. ■

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9

THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

Moby, the blues, and the secret history of raucous
by Charles Aaron

Why does my heart feel so bad? Like a neon sign flickering next to some nameless rural highway, the question appears early on Moby's new album. It's sung by a ghostly figure, most likely black, who is shaken and bewildered but not yet defeated. His words are sampled from someplace in the hazy past, but the anxious classical piano figure accompanying him sounds broadcast live. When a shifty rhythm track kicks in, and synthesized strings swell to meet another sampled voice—this one beckoning like a weary gospel singer inside an empty sanctuary—time almost seems to gasp. But Moby, despite his infamously stricken ego, isn't pouting by proxy. As the drag queens down at the punk club said when I was growing up in Georgia, give the

boy some room, he's feeling the realness.

For a musician who depends on digital gear to get over, Richard "Moby" Hall has always rejected the notion that electronic music allows us to transcend the "past." So here, on tracks such as "Honey" and "Find My Baby"—which uncannily match fresh instrumentation (played and produced by Moby) to vintage a cappella blues from Alan Lomax's field-recording box set *Sounds of the South*—he takes a busload of sub-bass-obsessed DJs down to the segregated South's front porch, reintroducing them to the palpable, aching roots of today's fussy breakbeat science. To hear an electronic dance album looking backward as intently as it dreams forward is a real-time jolt, and Moby rides the groove

music from the motion picture

AUSTIN POWERS THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

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REVIEWS

with a buzz reminiscent of his early, swirling techno anthems "Go" and "Ah Ah." Like Steve Reich's mid-'80s tape-loop pieces—such as "It's Gonna Rain," which flips a black Pentecostal preacher's words into hypnotic mantras that rival any Dutch gabber track—Play taps into its sampled vocals' vast emotional rhythms. The history isn't all dusty: Delf edits of rappers Spoonie Gee and Nikki D animate the electro-guitar rumble of "Body Rock" with a pulsing hip-hop heart.

Moby's wallowing in agony (angsty techno), lurching at ecstasy (wailing soul mamas), and longing for repose (limp keyboards) has resulted in the scattered, stunning charm of 1995's *Everything Is Wrong*, as well as the wanky despair (guitar solos) of 1996's *Animal Rights*. On *Play*, he purges the Rollins virus from his Powerbook, joining Björk, Chemical Brothers, and Garbage in rewriting what we used to call "alternative." Strumming a country-blues riff, laying down a driving bass loop, or essaying a symphonic piano interlude, he's restlessly focused, and finding roots he never knew he had. The album's most moving example is "Run On," which sounds like a small-group prayer meeting led by Moby on piano and lilting gospel vocals (I). Over a ratty snare beat, he acata himself into a trance about how God'll "cut you down" if you don't mend your tatty ways. Catch is, it's not Moby, but Bill Landford (of the Landfordaires), a 300-pound-plus African-American singer, circa World War II, who somehow sounds *exactly* like a certain elfin, Connecticut-born DJ. Sampling such distant but totally compatible voices to speak for him, Moby elevates the sadly nerdy timbre of his own voice. Quietly crooning over the gorgeous synth-pop of "Porcelain," he even convinces you he's ready to lead the congregation.

Ever since 1991's "Go" converted the *Twin Peaks* theme into a stomping

techno hymn/U.K. radio hit and transformed Moby into America's top rave DJ at age 25, he has been wracked with doubts about how to play the youth-culture crap game. While techno's anky 303 bass lines, thumping kick drums, and frantic synth flourishes inspired its mostly European fans to hug away their worries in a wordless, Ecstasy-tinged scum, Moby exulted and wanted to talk about shit. Begging for profound exchanges from kids who were quite comfortable with "Are you getting off yet?" he proclaimed his Christianity and veganism, and decried the unwillingness of other DJs to "perform." Liberated from a suburban childhood's punk thrashing by New York (gay) house and hip-hop, Moby was appalled when '90s dance music began to abandon its abiding roots in African-American traditions of testifying and signifying (respectively, exclaiming your spiritual journey and enacting your personal drama). In fact, England's currently hermetic drum'n'bass scene can be read as a contorted effort by nonverbal shy guys to emotionally protect themselves.

But on *Play*, Moby, now a pop-music vet at 33, faces up to his own history as an implicated American white boy. "South Side" the album's central image, alludes to the Chicago 'hood that symbolizes the mid-century Great Migration of black families north, but more deeply, to the poignantly impossible dream of escaping the past that's always marked our country's identity. Moby gets next to this hopeful/mournful passage, bedroom-rapping against a bumpin' cowbell break-beat, then singing (his voice multitracked into a mini-choir) and playing guitar like never before, while cruising a nameless, urban expressway. But no matter where he rides—East, West, North—"love and darkness" are both at his side. It's as real an image as rave, or alternative, culture has ever imagined. ■



THE FLAMING LIPS

TITLE
The Soft Bulletin
LABEL
Warner Bros.

Psychedelic rock has undergone some curious convolutions since its Haight-Ashbury heyday. For the most part, the hallucinations have gone, leaving a purely musical residue—a trail of sonic exploration that leads from Todd Rundgren's *A Wizard, A True Star* to the Olivia Tremor Control's *Black Flower: Animation Music*. Among the bands who've taken psy-

chedelia as a point of departure—into the unknown, into rock music's outer space—few have grown by such leaps and bounds as Oklahoma's Flaming Lips. Since the giant stride that was 1991's *In a Priest-Driven Ambulance*, Wayne Coyne and colleagues have unveiled everything they knew about music, giving themselves up to the sheer

9

mind-blasting rapture of sound. With 1995's *Clouds Taste Metallic* and 1997's ambitious 4-CD experiment *Zaireks* as stepping stones, they've finally reached their El Dorado: *The Soft Bulletin* may be the most extraordinary rock record you'll hear all year.

While *Clouds* stayed rooted in indie guitar land (and *Zaireks* was too unwieldy to deal with on a regular basis), *The Soft Bulletin* is a symphonic work of fully realized cosmic pop, full of surging, sweeping melodicism and expansive, heart-tugging tunes. A catalog of pet sounds and influences underpins the music: "A Spoonful Weighs a Ton" is a colossal fusion of Spiritualized and Mercury Rev, while the spacey instrumental "The Observer" suggests *Air* via

the High Llamas. "Gash" could be Bowie's *Scary Monsters* meets Robert Plant's *Manic Nirvana*; "The Spiderbite Song" is Brian Wilson remixed by y-ziq. But comparisons barely hint at the fabulous vastness of this record, a set driven from start to finish by the unfettered pounding of drummer Steven Drozd.

Now that former Lip Jonathan Donahue's Mercury Rev have pulled back from the Broadway space-pop of *See You on the Other Side*, the field is all Coyne's—Coyne with his dreamer's ideals and his sweetly straining voice. "Looking into space, it surrounds you," he sings on the glorious "What Is the Light." Stare into the sonic firmament that is *The Soft Bulletin*, and it will engulf you. **SARNEY HOSKINS**

**SWAY & KING TECH
FEATURING
DJ REVOLUTION**

TITLE...
This or That

LABEL...
Interscope

4

VARIOUS ARTISTS

TITLE...
*Rawkus Presents
Soundbombing II*

LABEL...
Rawkus

7



Although hip-hop mix tapes have gone from badly dubbed atreet corner bargains to studio-made affairs priced at \$15 a throw, the purchase isn't necessarily more satisfying. These days, mixes are cooked up less with flavorful songs than with famous-name freestyles and witty one-liners designed to spur that fleeing "He said what?" response. Hence, the prominence of punchliner Eminem on both *This or That* and *Soundbombing II*, delivering standard Slim Shady "white trash, fucking your wife in the ass" shock-hop routines. Sway & Tech (whose internationally syndicated *Wake Up Show* began in 1991 on San Francisco's KMET) have also enlisted simile-crazed MCs Canibus, Kool G Rap, and Chino XL, the latter poisoning the mic with stomach-turners like "I'll fuckin' murder your young style like JonBenet Ramsey." The original songs on *This or That* are as weak as its worst jokes: "The Anthem" is a bland knock-off of Wu-Tang's "Triumph," with a posse of ill-matched MCs from RZA to Jay Felony to KRS-One, and both Guru's "NY Nigus" and Bobby Digital's "Belly of the Beast" sag with leaden pro-

duction. *This or That* might lack merit completely were it not for a solid Old School set highlighted by Chill Rob G's 1990 classic, "Court Is in Session."

Soundbombing II steers clear of slapdash studio freestyles and, thank goodness, appearances by Jay-Z. Though it has its share of go-nowhere battle hymns—among them the loud but disappointing "WWII" with Pharoahe Monch and Shabaam Saadee—the collection's strength lies in its high concepts. Rawkus's resident preshepherd, Talib Kweli, strives to "turn jams into revolutionary parties," adding conscious-rap protein to the Reflection Eternal crew and on a duet with Bahamadia. The showstopper, however, is "Patriotism," by constant complainers Company Flow, a clever, cacophonous slam of all things American ("My favorite flavor of gas is mustard / I'm fucking a blind, hermaphrodite icon and convincing you that it's justice"). The cheerfully undanceable track and antiestablishment lyrics both reinforce Rawkus's rep as a label of originators and anchor *Soundbombing II* firmly at street level. **NEL DRUMMING**

REVIEWS CONTINUES ►

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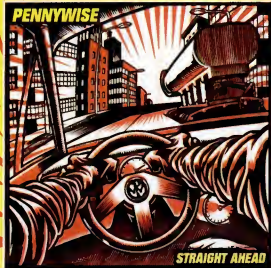
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REVIEWS



BACKSTREET BOYS

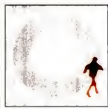
TITLE...
Millennium
LABEL...
Jive

Everybody: Backstreet's back! All right? With their tight grip on the public imagination already loosened by bands teenier and boppier, the Backstreet Boys have nonetheless decided that it's far worse to burn out than to flail away. *Millennium* is guilty of all the sins that second albums are heir to. First mistake: Opener "Larger Than Life" boogies deftly and punks daftly (who sez kids don't know from French art-disco?), but huffs fame like glue-it turns out we fans are larger than life only because we bliss up the Boys with our superized adulation. *Faux pas deux*: sonic auto-cannibalism, including the return of their digicoustic guitars, playing themselves out in the mix long after they've quit playing games with our hearts.

The album isn't funless: "I Want It That Way" is so candy it'll hit your pleasure center and the pop charts, and be gone before you finish this sentence. "Don't Want You Back" finds the sinner side of romance and lets it tear the

track apart—a song with an ideal "It's Gotta Be You" drives that signature synth-bass line deeper into the groove than their debut's first draft "Get Down" (though not as deep as second-draft "Everybody"), and while the Boys' "Spanish Eyes" don't shine like Madonna's, they put Tiffany's to shame. As a calendar-flipping soundtrack, *Millennium* ain't Robbie Williams's "Millennium," but it smashes Silverchair's "Anthem for the Year 2000." Among teenybopper follow-ups, it burns Hanson's Christmas disc but can't hold a candle to the New Kids' *Havin' 'Tough*.

Blown backward by fame and light on sounds, second albums make everyone equal. Right now the Boys are less similar to 'N Sync than to Alanis, scared kids in the spotlight with their nothing showing and the tick-tock talking loud. Of course, having an audience growing out of your "phase" minute by minute would turn anyone into a clock-watcher: Last year they were fresh men, but now they're only sophomores. **JOSHUA CLOVER**



ORBITAL

TITLE...
The Middle of Nowhere
LABEL...
ffrr/London

Orbital's place in the Rave Hall of Fame would be secure if they'd released only three tracks—1989's spangly "Chime"; its original B-side, the heartstring-tugging techno-symphony "Belfast"; and 1992's "Halcyon on/on," nine minutes of wordlessly rhapsodic vocals that make you feel like you're hovering on the brink of a swoon. "Halcyon," especially, showcases the group's forte—melody and harmony, as opposed to dance music's true domain (rhythm, timbre, and space). Orbital's beats, rarely more than adequate, are generally relegated to a relatively low position in the mix, while texturally, Phil and Paul Hartnoll stick mainly to the orchestral spectrum (pianos, strings, woodwinds, and so forth). All of which explains why Orbital's music is both utterly lovely and

somewhat conservative, at least from the stern perspective of purist club fiends and avant-technoheads.

In truth, after *Snivilisation's* flirtation with jungle breakbeats in '94, Orbital lost interest in keeping up with the state of the art. *The Middle of Nowhere* picks up where 1988's *Sides* left off—stirring soundtrack music in search of a movie. With its string cascades, trumpet solo, and wonderstruck female vocal, the opener, "Way Out," recalls John Barry's 007 scores. Throughout the album, Orbital favor quaint synth-tones; "Style" starts by sampling instructions for playing the stylophone, a rudimentary toy-synth popular with Brit-kids in the early 1970s. The riffs, too, are enjoyably old-fashioned—corrugated, rectilinear

The Shredder

Twenty-seven sentences. Twenty-three records. No mercy
by Joshua Clower

It's Rock'em Sock'em Robots month at Shredquarters. Will Shakespeare teach Erik Satie a lesson? Get in the ring...

Though they're both new releases, **Chic's Live at the Buddha** (Sumthing Else) and the **Family Values Tour '98** (Epic) are the cradle and grave of hip-hop, respectively: It's original jiggas vs. metaloid wiggas. Nile Rogers & Co. come out the cradle endlessly rocking their booty-shakin' disco roadshow, but Ice Cube and the Korn-bred crew know how to dance on a grave, even if it's their own. Draw.

Reunited big-ballers **Eightball & MJJ** freak the futuristic *In Our Lifetime*, Vol. 1 (Suave House). **The Pope** gets right with the millennium on five-language New Age chantfest **Abba Pater** (Sony Classical). A lot of praya-hataz say the Pontiff's fallen off, though he still loves it when you call him Big Papa. Nonetheless, decision for the postmillennial plays; can someone say "space age bee-atchelor pad music"?

Evolved spiritual being/model **Crispian Mills** leads **Kula Shaker's** comeback with **Peasants, Pigs & Astronauts** (Columbia). An album of *Hair* outtakes and *Animals* knockoffs—uh, thank you, India. Score an easy triumph for **Shella Chandra**, South London/South Indian plainsong queen; we're actually grateful for her *Moonsong* retrospective (Real World).

Green Fields of Foreverland by **Gentle Waves** (Jepster), led by Isobel from e-folkers **Belle & Sebastian**, sounds like game-show music that's lost its way in a dark forest. Pitted against **Tattoos and Scars** by **Montgomery Gentry** (Columbia)—swaggering badass country in the Waylon tradition—the fight is stopped when it becomes clear the hands can't recognize each other, though they're both on the dark side of the folk tradition.

Ex-Operation Ivy ska-punk hero **Jesse Michaels** reappears under the name **Common Rider** with **Last Wave Rockers** (Panic Button); ex-Non Blonde **Linda Perry** recurs as **Linda Perry (Rock Star)**. She's found a religion in the Almighty and Robert Plant. Jesse's found his heart, and gets the knockout behind a late burst of love songs, plus melancholy rocker "Signal Signal."

In 1970, country weirdo **Lee Hazlewood** filmed the draft-dodging horse-



The Pope: Word to the praya-hataz, riding romance Cowboy in Sweden; you can hear the hilarious, weird, erratically amazing soundtrack (featuring Nina Lizell) on **Sonic Youth Steve Shelley's Smells Like Records**. Actual Swedes the **Cardigans** rerelease their feux-naive debut **Emmerdale** (Minty Fresh), sounding like off-kilter themes to forgotten '50s TV shows. Despite the **Cardigans'** bonus EP, never bet against the cowboy.

The **Ninje Tune** money bout between the **Herbaliser's Very Mercenary** and **Funky Porcini's The Ultimately Empty Million Pound** sets off identity vs. abstraction, jazzy guest rappers vs. jazzy sequencing. Narrow decision to **Mercenary** for bringing back Bahamadia and the **Dream Warriors**.

Funk-free undercard, long-title division: **The Most Relaxing Classical Album in the World...Ever** (Virgin) vs. six-volume **Be Thou Now Persuaded: Living in a Shakespearean World** (Rhino). Despite luscious thematic disc arrangements, the Bard of Avon TKOs a bevy of classics from the breakaway republic of Muzakstan.

In a dream matchup, **Atari Teenage Riot** promise a **60 Second Wipe Out** (DHR), while the **Donnas Get Skin Tight** (Lookout). This classic theory vs. practice breakdown pits digital hardcore's billion-watt anarchism against West Coast adolescent overdrive, the politics of dancing vs. just plain wrecking shit. Samples-only eutectic **Alce Empire** might be the last guitar hero, still capable of mining punk rage from metal machine music; the **Donnas** might be the last real teenagers, seventeen-going-on-octane. Which side are you on? ■

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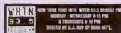
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stabs that flash back to the 1991 Euro-hardcore sound often dished as "heavy-metal techno." The guitar-laced "I Don't Know You People" even recalls English punk bands like the Ruts and the Stranglers, right down to the thuggish bass line and baroque organ vamps. But then, Orbital basically are a rock group, albeit in electronic clothing.

They've played the Royal Albert Hall, released a live single, and they sell shitloads of albums to a hugely devoted fan base. In the high-turnover world of dance culture, Orbital have endured, precisely through downplaying rhythm-science that might confuse beat-deaf rock fans, and concentrating instead on crafting tunes that sing in your heart. **SIMON MEYNOLDS**



ELF POWER

TITLE...
I Dream in Sound

LABEL...
Arena Rock/Elephant 6



THE MUSIC TAPES

TITLE...
1st Imaginary Symphony for Nomad

LABEL...
Merge



APPLES IN STEREO

TITLE...
Her Wallpaper Reverie

LABEL...
SpinART/Elephant 6



Now that a group of Louisiana-bred friends with a penchant for psychedelia and John Lennon impersonations are operating a nationwide collective under the Elephant 6 banner, swearing allegiance to long-ago British invaders, and indoctrinating recruits at an alarming rate (O! Montreal, Beulah, Minders, etc.), should Janet Reno and the ATF be alerted? Is the Apples' Robert Schneider studying RZA's business tactics? And when's the new line of Elephant-Wear dropping? More to the point: What does having the E6 Better Gnomes and Gardens imprimatur on your album really mean?

The second album by the Athens, Georgia, quartet Elf Power shows the group's pop-craft getting wiser and fuller despite their adherence to J.R.R. Tolkien-style nomenclature, forgettable hidden tracks, and lyrics such as "We saw a shining season / Emerald trees and / The worms laughing in the dirt." Recorded with David Fridmann (from the Mercury Rev/Flaming Lips cadre), Andrew Rieger's songs and the band's thin, high-pitched vocals put vintage rock to work in their own flower gar-

den: See the Ringo-flavored "Olde Tyme Waves," the Mekons-meet-Neil Young-ish "Jane," and the epic Zombies-and-the-kitchen-sink freak-out "We Dream in Sound."

The Music Tapes' Julian Koster's stated goal is to bring his imaginary world into the "real one." His appealingly schizophrenic lo-fi production, stream-of-consciousness lyrics (castles, friendly silens, etc.), and nonlinear arrangements shouldn't be dismissed as stoner gibberish (hint: It helps to listen along with the accompanying comic). It's just a hippie commune that needs a better waste disposal system. Were fleeting moments such as "What The Single Made the Needle Sing," "Song of the Nomad Lost," and "The Television Tells Us" more fully developed, they would make any real-worlder swoon.

E6 production whiz/Apples in Stereo chief Robert Schneider remains a top-notch songwriter—he can still toss off blithe ditties that'll own your head for days without venturing into the self-indulgent abyss. Although his latest is a vague-concept EP interrupted by simple 30-second interludes, the seven

songs are first-rate Apples: The sensational "Questions and Answers" will grow you a new moptop, the gorgeous mid-tempo balled "The Benefits of Lying With Your Friend" approaches "God Only Knows" status, and "Y2K" offers a rare opportunity to hear the choirboy-ish

Schneider get cynical ("I know you believe the fucked-up things that you need..."). Like that of the K or Flying Nun labels, the Elephant 6 product line may vary. But in this age of soulless mega-labels, their logo is as close to a quality guarantee as you are going to get. **ANDY GENSLER**



SLICK RICK

TITLE...
The Art of Storytelling

LABEL...
Def Jam



Jiggy when jiggy wasn't cool, by turns utterly charming and charismatically vulgar, Slick Rick gave hip-hop one of its great signature voices. Yet his '90s career has served as one long cautionary tale—namely, do not blow up large and then let your label release records while you are in jail, ever. Last seen quiet and bummed in 1995's repumentary *The Show*, the Ruler now seems on the mend with a set of easygoing hip-hop tales. Except for the fact that his ghetto-aristocrat accent seems to have paled while he was in lock-down, it's a genuine return to form. In fact, *Storytelling* might as well be subtitled *Let to Mention Rapping in Complete, Diagrammable Sentences*. While MC Ricky D was doing time, post-Wu hip-hop turned basic grammar on its punk ass in favor of fractured verbal glyphs and designer-label flow. Seems like no one told Rick, and the results are weirdly charming, like seeing your uncle sing songs from the Old Country at a

wedding. Over spare, somewhat non-descript beats, all sorts of folks line up to kiss Rick's eye patch, including devoted fans like Snoop and Nas. But it's the MCs whose styles have little to do with Rick's straight-shed narrative who shine brightest. OutKast rhyme crunkily with the man on the single "Street Talkin'", and on "Frozen," Raekwon's language-poet word geometry counterpoints Rick's Iceberg Slim schtick so perfectly that rap's aesthetic history seems encapsulated in three minutes. "2 Wey Street" shows the Ruler turning down groupies due to the weight of the ring on his finger (don't ask), but lest you think he's turned totally family man, "Adultsway" is far and away the filthiest hip-hop track you will hear this year (you'd think that a guy who's just got out of prison would avoid lyrics about buggery, but you'd be wrong). Out of nowhere, he's back in the game. **JOE GROSS**



THE LONDON SUEDE

TITLE...
Head Music

LABEL...
Nude/Columbia



How do you keep on keepin' on when your art is all about crash'n'burn? It's the ultimate rock question, and the answer separates guiding lights from shooting stars. Ever since Suede were christened Britain's new best boys before releasing their first single, they have struggled to win while celebrating beautiful losers, masochistic lovers,

drug-addled trash, and kissing in a room to a popular tune. After two doses of dusky perfection, these unbesheided ambitious glamsters picked up the pieces of a broken band with a flawed album created for nonbelievers. *Coming Up's* dumbed-down, instantly accessible peeks triumphed overseas back in '96, but didn't click with

REVIEWS CONTINUES IN

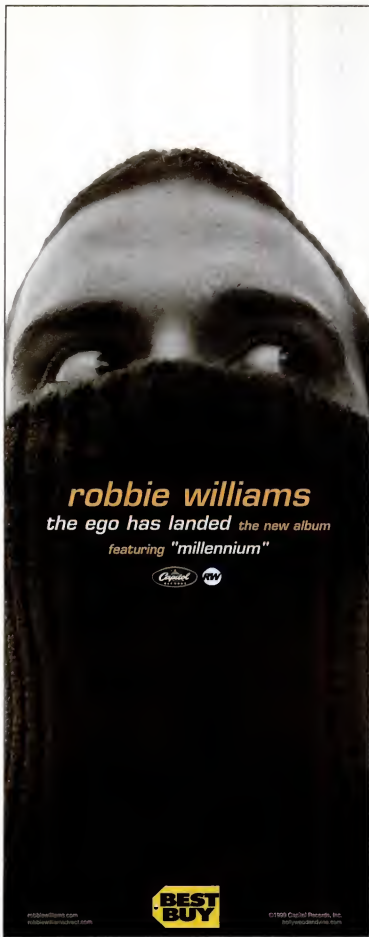


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Yanka warming up to Oasis and Blur. *Head Music* embraces the supposed contradiction of rocking out with a dance-music mentor. Rather than getting wiggy with it like Blur and William Orbit on 13, Suede and Steve Osborne (engineer on DJ supreme Paul Oakenfold's countless trance anthems, as well as the Happy Mondays' *Pills 'n' Thrills and Bellyaches*) achieve a hard precision that brings back the brutality of early Suede while lending a complex sheen to simplistic material. As already proven on *Coming Up*, Richard Oakes and Neil Codling rarely approach the com-

pressed ardor achieved by the band's original guitar cutie Bernard Butler. Yet the arrangements elevate their ordinary chord progressions and dumb riffs with rhythms that swing and stab—it's not a stretch to imagine Marilyn Manson fans thrashing to the Sex Pistole pummel of "Can't Get Enough" or the (ironically) anti-disco title track. Singer Brett Anderson remains more observer than participant in his poetry's doomed passion plays until the old-school Suede diva drama "He's Gone," where a lover's loss "feels like the words of a song." Seldom does intertextuality seem so sexy. **BARRY WALTERS**



RAINER MARIA

TITLE...
Look Now Look Again

LABEL...
Polygram



JUNO

TITLE...
This Is the Way It Goes and Goes and Goes

LABEL...
DeSoto/Pacifico



As today's best and brightest trade in guitars for samplers and swap those dog-eared editions of *Mystery Train* for import copies of *Brighter Than the Sun*, doubt settles on Indieland. What is rock still good for?

Well, if you're a Midwestern teen whose world shook the first time you cracked open Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, rock is good for all sort of things. On the sophomore album by Madison, Wisconsin, trio Rainer Maria, *Look Now Look Again*, frontwoman Cathlin DeMarrais hurtles through waves of teen angst that Morn, the Wolfmen, and Me never imagined, but Bob Mould, Grant Hart, and Greg Norton invented a precise vocabulary for. At times she sounds ground down: "I'm certain, if I drive into those trees / I'd make less of a mess than you've made of me," she sings on "Broken Radio." The music behind her is that mess, just barely shaped into songs. William Kuehn's catalytic drumming and Kyle Fischer's grandiose guitar take out trees left and right, while DeMarrais's bass skirts the shoulder. When, at album's close, she announces "I'll find my voice tonight,"

you realize that, thanks to a 50-year-old guitar-based musical tradition, she already has. Rock is good for that.

"Rock n'roll will never die," figures the narrator of *The Great Salt Lake/Into the Lavender Crevices of Evering the Otters Have Been Pushed*, the lead track off Juno's *This Is the Way It Goes and Goes and Goes*, "but, my God, it deserves to." If *Look Now Look Again* is about resisting rock's death, Juno's debut is about surrendering to it. Rather than spotlight a vocalist—a charismatic figure who can channel the music into something comprehensible—Juno downgrade their ego end up the guitar quotient. No solos, though—Jason Guyer, Arlie Carstens, and Gabe Carter all wield axes, and all three go at 'em at once, producing one of those great centerless guitar records, like Tom Verlaine's *Dreamtime* or My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless*, where the guitar hero gives way to the guitar victim. As Cathlin DeMarrais would tell you, submission is no state to live your life in. But it's not a bad skill to learn somewhere along the way. Rock is good for that, too. **JEFF SALAMON**

Jump Cuts

FUTURE AKA

TITLE...
Future Pilot AKA Us
A Galaxy of Sound

LABEL...
Sulfur/Beggars Banquet

7

Perhaps gleaming some valuable lessons from Talvin Singh's *OK*—last year's over-stuffed exercise in hot-wired exoticism—Indie native, Scotland resident, and ex-Soup Dragons bassist Future Pilot AKA (a.k.a. Sushil K. Dada) keeps his funk-low-key. With help from an odd assortment of coconspirators (including Cornershop, Kim Fowley, Scanner, ex-Suicide Alan Vega), Dada sprinkles digital masala judiciously over down tempo tracks that slink

and gently bob, but never wander aimlessly. On "Teri Mitti Bani," Cornershopper Tjinder Singh mixes vintage Bollywood pop with vintage Jamaican dub; Bill Wells plucks a slo-mo spy movie melody on "Pink Returns"; and the Pastale get reverby on "Hurricane Fighter Plane." This Pilot takes you on a journey, to be sure. But it feels less like a trip to the Gandhi World theme park than a tour of the international pop underground. **MARC WEINGARTEN**

SPACEHEADS

TITLE...
Rage! Station

LABEL...
Merge

8

Calling Spaceheads a British drum and trumpet duo is like calling the Harlem Globetrotters a New York basketball team. For a decade, homman Andy Diagram and kitarman Richard Harrison have been blasting brainy jazz-funk (roll call: Pigbag, Miles Davis, Can, Don Cherry) into interstellar overdrive with bursts of drum-corps dazzle and brass pyrotechnics, then muting the mix with a clutch of electroglitzmos (including the bizarre

"Trumpet Machine Thing" setup that Diagram also uses in his work with David Thomas and 2 Pale Boys). On the "Heads" fourth LP (and second studio outing proper), noggin-swiveling pans and 3-D sounds abound: in the petal-dropping exotics of "Heads in the Orbit," the cosmic drift of "Magic in the Space Age," and the ecstatic bounce of the title track. Giddy, panoramic reels for the IMAX theater between your ears. **SALLY JACOB**

MIKE ERICO

TITLE...
Pictures of the Big Vacation

LABEL...
Warner Bros.

7

When he's on his game, Mike Eriko balances the salts and oils of his human antipasti just right. "Now that every bridge is burned / I understand," he says while rousing his drunken girlfriend under an apocalyptic party on "Sooner or Later." Four songs later, he's a crotchety octogenarian using a slingshot on the neighborhood kids and ruing a romance he was too chickenhearted to chase. Astute singer/songwriters would not a

signature deaden the doorways of coffee shops throughout the land, and if Eriko's isn't as indelible as Elliott Smith's lo-fi incursions or Rufus Wainwright's diva curts, it's still a good read. Whether mating yawling blues with soft slow jazz on "Good," or playing to an African tongue drum melody on the stark closer, "Someday," this debut proves Eriko a jack of many trades, and a master of some. **BRITT ROSSON**

RUBBERROOM

TITLE...
Architechnology

LABEL...
3-2-1/Indus

8

As hip-hop moves into its post-gangsta phase, new definitions of hardcore emerge. Or actually, old ones reemerge. On their debut, *Architechnology*, Chicago's Rubberroom bring back the days when rap wars were metaphorical, before fierce beats, dense wordmithery, and virtuoso scratching were overtaken by gets and jams. These guys are so Old School they should have named themselves Rubberroom 222.

But don't call it a throwback—stuck in the rap no-man's land of Chicago, these two MCs and two producers have worked up a singular take on hip-hop verities. Check out Meta-Mo, who could get by simply on the

sound of his booming, rough-hewn voice, but who takes the time to enunciate as formally as Ralph Flinnes. Or mush-mouthed Lumba, who breathes more heavily between couplets than Branda Vaccaro doing a Maxi-Pad commercial. Or producers like of Weight and Farum, whose arrangements may be skeletal, but who make sure there's phat on them bones—even in jungle, break-beats don't come heavier than this. The skills on display are so impressive that the 13 turntablists who provide the unpredictable cuts and scratches almost seem like an afterthought. Meet the new NWA—The A is for Aptitude. **JEFF SALAMON**

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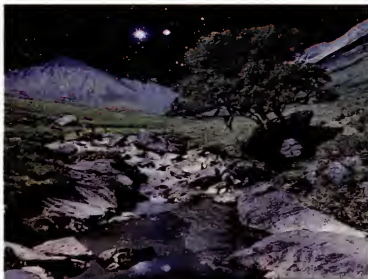
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REVIEWS



B.G.

TITLE...
*Chopper City in the
Ghetto*

LABEL...
Cash Money/Universal



Most hardcore-rap crews model their personas after any one of a baker's dozen of hustlers/killers/general badasses. If there's a fictional role model for the Cash Money crew, it's Sportin' Life, Porgy and Bess's rapacious Afrohedonist. They don't dwell too long on the pitfalls, dangers, and struggles of the thug life; they're just as interested in the exhilaration of thug leisure. B.G.'s *Chopper City in the Ghetto* is true to form: More than a couple of folks get smoked here and there, sure. Just as often, though, B.G. and his bevy of guests (Juvenile, the Hot Boys, Big Tymers) spin hood fantasies so garish they're practically preadolescent: parties in the Superdome, candy-coated helicopters, women with diamond-encrusted toenails—toenails, now—taking bubble baths in all-marble bathrooms. The Cash Money clique doesn't offer a new spin on the floss'n shine routine, they just take it so far over the top, you can't be mad at 'em.

Rec time comes with a price, however. Warfare is never far away in B.G.'s New

Orleans, where folks "ring choppers like church bells," and there's an AK-47 in the backseat of the Rolls for the foolish. Producer Mannie Fresh's brilliantly spare beatology—juggling hypnotic melody loops with unadorned drum-machine rhythms and guitar/bass/synth backdrops—is the perfect foil for B.G.'s languidly off-the-best flow. Tracks like the Latinesque "Made Man" and the cyber-gangsta opus "Thuggin'" give a smooth sheen to even the most graphic lines, while "Trigga Play" resonates with a cool menace that hearkens back to the early days of Snoop and Dre. While B.G. recognizes that all play and no work makes for a dead hot boy, he also understands the power of positive thinking, refusing to acknowledge any scenario that doesn't end with him picking out the showroom Benz. Some are content to play the game, but B.G. settles for nothing less than omnipotence. And if you know who's going to finish first, why not talk shit? How's that Rolex, playboy? **TONY GREEN**

SMASH MOUTH

TITLE...
Astro Lounge

LABEL...
Interscope



Two years ago, when Smash Mouth snuck into the upper reaches of the Top 40 with a bit of '60s-damaged pop-rock called "Walkin' on the Sun," they looked like the slightly lumpier cousins of No Doubt and Sugar Ray. But instead of miming punk realism, San Jose's Smash Mouth played with ska and hardcore like a toddler plays with Speak and Spell. On *Astro Lounge*, they fully emerge as a goofy but deeply schooled popcore band who sing about getting blunted and nodding off on the American Dream like a bunch of stoner Smurfs.

Both singer Steve Harwell's jolly-uncle rasp and guitarist Greg Camp's hooky, genre-splicing riffs turn every song into a splashy cartoon: about program directors (the New Wavey "Radio"), wasted

ska-punk roadies (the dub-for-dummies anthem "Road Man"), and overly sexy girlfriends (the Farfisa frug "Can't Get Enough of You Baby"). It's less about recycled Bad Religion pyrotechnics (see the Offspring) than quirky pop references, from XTC to ? and the Mysterians. *Astro Lounge* is a fresh mix of attitude and ingenuousness: When Harwell quacks about "Master Moon checking on how y'all living" on "I Just Wanna See," he sounds like a skatespunk B-boy narrating one of the adventures of Little Nemo.

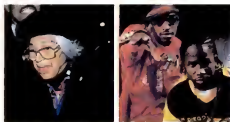
And that's what really sets Smash Mouth apart from Orange County power-pop pretenders like Lit, who use Judas Priest licks and Rat Pack-style moves to impersonate hard men. Smash Mouth couldn't care less about hardness or

Singles by Charles Aaron

With their hit "Rosa Parks," OutKast spur a lawsuit and raise the question: Who owns history?

In Rita Dove's moving new poetry volume, *On the Bus With Rosa Parks*, there's a dedication quote from historian/critic Simon Schama: "All history is a negotiation between familiarity and strangeness." I can't think of a more dead-on description of the recent events that have conspired to link Ms. Parks, the most familiar name of the Civil Rights movement after Dr. Martin Luther King, with OutKast, hip-hop's strangest young artists.

The legal trouble began when the 85-year-old Parks—who became a national icon in the mid-1950s for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a segregated Alabama bus—was informed by the minister of her Detroit church that her name appeared on a parental-advisory sticker for OutKast's 1998 *Aqueeni* ("Rosa Parks" is the first single). She then directed her attorney, Gregory J. Reed, to file suit April 5 in Wayne County (Michigan) Circuit Court, seeking "in excess of \$25,000," charging false use of Parks's "name or image." The suit also demanded LaFace, Arista, and BMG destroy inventory copies of *Aqueeni*, and change the song's title on future copies. Richard Manson, of the Millennium Entertainment Group, who represents Parks, charged that OutKast was guilty of "the same kind of conduct" Parks faced 40 years ago—"as abuse of people." Of course, well before *Aqueeni*'s release, OutKast took care to state that the song was titled in respectful tribute—"dropping [something] subliminal for people who don't know about Rosa Parks, so they'll look into it," as the group's Andre "Dre" Benjamin told *Blaze* magazine. The song's video was even shot on "Sweet Auburn Avenue, the storied stretch of Atlanta asphalt that is now home to the King Center. But the song does use Civil Rights symbolism in a mischievous, self-absorbed, classically hip-hop way. The verses never even mention Parks, while the "funky hoodown" chorus—"Ah ha, bush that fass / Everybody move to the back of the bus"—drops loaded Movement imagery into a party track about OutKast's comeback, and lets that imagery float around



Busin' it: from left, Rosa Parks, Dre, and Big Boi.

like weed smoke. The song could be heard as disrespectful, especially when Dre's partner Big Boi (a.k.a. Antoine Patton) brags that he's "bulldoggin' ho's like them Georgetown Hoyas." But in the end, it's the song's defiantly abstract stance that makes it so memorable.

The constant invocation of the Civil Rights Movement's nonviolent philosophy has been a sticky point for years with younger generations. Rappers, in particular, have complained about being instructed on exactly how to rebel. Perhaps as a result, political issues have never found a consistent place in hip-hop; asserting one's own value as an individual human being is the more pressing issue. Yet "Rosa Parks" is a hip-hop song worth fighting over, not for its reckless wordplay, but because OutKast had the guts to "negotiate" this thorny conflict. They sample the past for their own generation's needs, but without shutting everybody else out. The Organized Noize production team mix G-crunk rhythm slink, turntable scratches, sunny acoustic guitar, and a harmonica breakdown from Rev. Robert Hood (Dre's pastor at New Morning Light Baptist Church) to envision "dirty" Southern youth joyfully bumpin' rumps with their suit-and-tied elders. Like a funk-ed-up African juba dance, the song welcomes both sacred and profane, young and old.

Acknowledging our country's racial legacy, while praying we're not trapped by it forever, Dre raps, "You focus on the past / Your ass'll be a haw what," then adds, "That's one to live by or either one to die to / I try to just throw it at you / Determine your own adventure." Not exactly "I have a dream," but it's straight-up 1999 reality, and I wonder if Ms. Parks isn't more a disappointed parent than an abused icon. It can be a bitch sometimes to watch your kids follow their own path. ■

REVIEWS CONTINUES ►

"This shit is real! Watch out cuz they're not gonna stop."
— Fred Durst of Limp Bizkit

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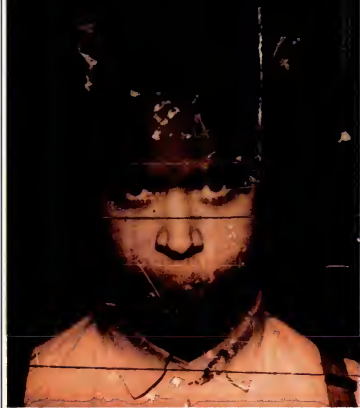
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REVIEWS

alienation, and if they have a mission, it's best expressed in Harwell's lyric from "Home": "What do you do when opportunity knocks / When success stops and along comes fame?" On *Astro Lounge*, Smash Mouth deal with the spectre of being one-hit wonders

by hunkering down and crafting a cohesive, consistently smart, and deceptively simple pop LP. They make jangly guitars, theremins, and songs about record company pony-tailed power-suits sound like a return to Peewee's Playhouse. **PAT BLASHILL**



NAUGHTY BY NATURE

TITLE...
*Nineteen Naughty Nine:
Nature's Fury*

LABEL...
Arista



It's been four years and one record label since Naughty by Nature's last album, *Poverty's Paradise*, a relative flop despite the ubiquitous MTV *Jams* joint "Feel Me Flow." Now, after signing with Arista—home to such other hip-hop elders as Run-DMC and Brand Nubian—Treach, Vinnie, and Kay Gee are once again "back like verbrates." Is it an occasion for hip-hop hoorays? Or will fans be humming "Mourn You 'Til I Join You" as they file *Nature's Fury* next to other hip-hop comeback casualties?

Naughty's latest has the same backyard barbecue sound of their greatest hits (which, synergistically, have just been compiled and rereleased by their old label, Tommy Boy). It blows open with "Ring the Alarm," a nod to hip-hop's Fu-Schnickens and dancehall artist Tenor Saw. But the bulk of the album jacks beats from black boomer classics like "Car Wash" and "A Lover's Holiday," a move sure to thrill urban radio programmers and irk hook-hatin' hip-hop heads. Even though it includes rap cameos by Big Punisher, Krayzie Bone, and the No

Limit camp, the album overall skews R&B, with plenty of sing-song showcases for acts like Thane and Next, who croon on the hilarious "The Blues" (alternate title: "Big Balls").

The main problem here is that Naughty try to make every song an anthem. But anthems tend to keep you outside of the narrative, whereas today's best hip-hop draws you in. Treach never tells us, for instance, how it feels to go from "ghetto bastard" to actor/model, or how one goes from being down with O.P.P. to being a committed baby-father with hip-hop's own Peppé—tales that could be at least as enlightening on the subject of hip-hop gender politics as Lauryn Hill's women-are-from-the-East-Coast, men-are-from-the-West-Coast anthems. Treach still wants Naughty to be cheerleaders, to make us "put 'em up, what what" as he commands on the well-named "Wicked Bounce." But often, their schoolyard chants make it seem like Naughty stayed back, while everyone else passed to the next grade. **CRAIG SEYMOUR**

includes "Battle Flag (featuring Pigeonhed)"

"It's so f---in' cool, the nation's thermometers should be recalibrated. It's so damn funky, James Brown should beat his legs off in tribute. To attempt to resist its lascivious boss squeals and stacked-up beats is foolhardy."

- NME

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- Spin

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MINISTRY

TITLE...
Dark Side of the Spoon

LABEL...
Warner Bros.



Survival is its own reward, or, depending on your philosophy, its own punishment—a twist Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker can surely appreciate. Back when Nine Inch Nails was a carpenter, before Marilyn Manson got his contacts, there was a Chicago duo named Ministry with a nasty idea. They forged a death-driven cyborg of metal riffs, Goth mood, Eurobeat, and

machine-shop rhythms, fired it to life with a lightning bolt of narcotics, and sent their version of the Frankenstein called "industrial" lumbering forward to scare clubland and invade the record collections of sullen high-schoolers and collective mass-murderers. Ministry attracted the damaged people like the pusher in the worst part of town, and all the crafty

Rack Jobbing by Will Hermes

Subgenre surveying for subcultural scavengers

FILE UNDER: POP MINIMALISM



Low, *Secret Name* (Kranky) Triggering loops, palling around with a string trio, stealing a bit of country melody from "Love Hurts," and making the time-honored connection between Missouri and misery (they're Minnesotan, but they can relate), their usual alo-mo depression-as-religion ambience is at once more varied and less soothing, and better for it—chalk it up to age, or maybe just Galaxie 500 reissues. Nod to the mod: LP surface noise sampled!

FILE UNDER: HIP-HOP PAST-TO-FUTURISM



Dream Warriors, *Anthology: A Decade of Hits 1988-1998* (Beat Factory/Priority) Off the U.S. radar since 1991's *De La Soul-ful And Now the Legacy Begins*, Canada's King Lu and Capital Q have resurfaced via the Herbalizer's "a Road of Many Signs." This set covers the years from phat to gangsta lean, during which their boombastic jazz flow only got swingier. Back on said road early this year, they were coming with jungle-tech rhymes that need to be put to wax now.

FILE UNDER: CYBER-LATINOS



Various Artists, *The New Latinaires* (Ubiquity) Nuevo jacks take conga-heavy rare grooves, boogaloo, and plenty of samba, knob it just enough to tweak Roland-trained ravers, and solve the equation $\text{Lambada} \times \text{the Orb} \cdot \text{Macarena} + \text{Mongo Santamaría} + \text{Mo' Wax}$. In the process, they revive polyglot DJ culture, otherwise left for dead between the Deep Forest and the Transglobal Underground. Key selling point: Carl Craig's remix of Johnny Blas's "Picadillo," a south-of-the-border answer to Basement Jaxx's "Rendez-Vu."

FILE UNDER: CANNED GOODS



Can, *Can Box* (Mute) Between reissues and tributes, you'd think they were Led Zeppelin—which, in their krautrock way, they probably were. Included is a fat scrapbook heavy on interviews (in French, German, and English), two CDs of live sets from 1971-77 that range from sluggish to incandescent, and a two-hour documentary/concert video that confirms Jaki Liebeck is the most important drummer since Clyde Stubblefield. A worthy introduction to the fathers of Stereolab, disco, and other things that make modern life interesting.

FILE UNDER: PORNTRONICA



Add N to (X), *Avant Hard* (Mute) **Various Artists *Suck It and See*** (Pussyfoot/Palm Pictures) **Khan, *I-988-GET-KHAN*** (Matador) Guess the recent run on '70s skin-flick soundtracks (see the Crippled Dick Hot Wax label) inspired some digger(s) to rise to the occasion. Best is *Add N to (X)*, who put E in the ELP last time out, but here use their analog vibrators for a set less Robot Wars than Solid State Swingers: The cartoon video for "Metal Fingers in My Body" is a girl's fantasy of Lewinaking R2D2. The Howie B-hotbed *Suck It* is two discs of heavy-breathing beet-wenke; get the DVD and replay two nipple-pierced hotties groping in a sauna. Khan foreplays through electro-bilibent territory and leaves you with a phone-jack coda. The new sounds of the chill-out nation? Depressing.

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REVIEW'S CONTINUES ►

depressives with samplers took notes. Now, Manson and Reznor are millionaires, and Ministry? They're still, so to speak, in their basement room with a needle and a spoon.

Seven albums worth of "life sucks" may be reward enough, but you have to figure Ministry would like to get paid. With a song on the *Matrix* soundtrack ("Bad Blood") and the release of *Dark Side of the Spoon*, their time may have come. After scrapping a purportedly "atmospheric" album, Ministry have reenlisted noisemen Louie Sivtek (guitar) and Rey Washam (drums) and have weighed in with a virtual summary of their career-long grudge match against aural hygiene. "Supermanic Soul" opens

with a tank-tread riff; the dungeon-snuff soundtrack "Whip or the Chain" and the doomy throb of "Kali" are lessons in aural unhygiene. In "Step," a wrecked celeb wheedles about his rehab over a metallic stoptime riff. "Nursing Home" is seven minutes of skronking sax and clucking banjo over drums reminiscent of "When the Levee Breaks." But when is ugly ugly enough? The new album's Pink Floyd reference suggests Ministry want *Spoon* to do for industrial what *Moon* did for art-rock—establish a genre standard against which all records will be measured; trouble is, they set that standard with *Psalm 69* in 1992, and *Spoon* doesn't deliver enough of the bad medicine. **MARK LEPAGE**

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WAYLON JENNINGS

TITLE...
Love of the Common People

LYRIC...
Buddha



WAYLON JENNINGS

TITLE...
Honky Tonk Heroes

LYRIC...
Buddha



Signed by glossmeister Chet Atkins in 1965, Waylon cut plenty of smooth country for RCA in his pre-Outlaw years, and he even liked some of it. Perhaps the best relic of this epoch, when he'd been shrink-wrapped into a Glen Campbell turtle-neck, is 1967's *Love of the Common People*, now released for the first time on CD. Jennings applied the only country pipes as butch as Johnny Cash's to songs by the Beatles and Mel Tillis (see the modern murder ballad "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town," later Top 10 for Kenny Rogers). The title track has become a populist classic, recycled most recently by Lenny Kaye of Patti Smith's band.

But beneath the sheen, a battle raged. The Swingle-y backup singers and other studio kitch of the Atkins era hid Waylon's past as a rock DJ and Buddy Holly sideman. Six years and a bunch of LPs after *Common People*, he brought his own band into the studio and self-produced a concept album that became the template for a movement. On *Honky Tonk Heroes*, he stripped arrangements

down to bass, guitar, and fiddle when needed, sometimes singing odd, untutored harmonies with himself. The metro-nomic bass, the raw presentation, and the lyric about a restier outsider changed the rules in Nashville, and loosed a flood of work from Willie Nelson, David Allan Coe, and others who put country music in jeans and leather forever.

During the rest of the '70s, while "Outlaw" devolved first into a marketing ploy, then a cliché, Waylon crafted a half-dozen more landmark albums. He also became a chemical outlaw: Black-clad and coked sleepless, he stalked Nashville at all hours, from the Bump Bump Room to Country Mac's. He played pinball for days, and spooked himself by wearing a pair of Hank Sr.'s boots. He asked himself in song, "Don't You Think This Outlaw Bit's Done Got Out of Hand?" The Outlaw scene would end in a drug bust, a triple bypass, and voiceovers for *The Dukes of Hazzard*, but the beginnings are unimpeachably fine. **MARK SCHONE**

Weird Old Country

The Disinternment of Souled American. by Richard Gehr

With due respect to old Uncle Tupelo, it was the cultishly revered country-and-Midwestern combo Souled American who laid the deep, dank groundwork for the No Depression movement more than a decade ago. A remarkable band by any measure, they subsequently faded into Chicago obscurity, eking out the occasional record while amassing such fans as Richard Buckner and Will Oldham along the way. Talk about attrition: Souled American's collected output virtually defines the concept—half a dozen exquisitely crafted yet increasingly unburied album-length shrines to loneliness, despair, and decline, band roster shrinking steadily with the passing years. This is a group that understands life's dirty little secret isn't simply that you're going to grow old. Everybody knows that. Souled American confirm the more hideous fact that you're going to grow even older.

The band's first three albums—*Pea*, *Flubber*, and *Around the Horn*—came out of the gates during the prolific 18 months when the band was signed to the doomed American division of England's Rough Trade records. You can hear hints of the reggae cover band they might have been in Joe Adducci's bubbling six-string bass, although songwriter Chris Grigoroff's distended drawl—that of a wayfarer staggering down a dusty road or a heavy-lidded drinker trying to remember to forget—and Scott Tuma's feux-steel-guitar tones open wide country spaces. Drummer Joey Barnard, meanwhile, snaps out fifth-line New Orleans marching rhythms so behind the beat that he could have been in a different town altogether. "Between the notes," Grigoroff promises in the first song on Souled American's first album, "echoes will loom."

Things weren't looking all that upful for the band when Barnard resigned in the wake of Rough Trade America's 1991 demise, and the band never got around to hiring another drummer. Rough Trade U.K. released *Sonny*, an album of covers, in 1992; the quartet's take on such traditional folk tunes as "Buck Dancer's Choice" and "Rock the Cripple Lucy," the

Louvin Brothers' "Changin' the Words," and George Jones's "Please Don't Let Me Love You" only proved how much weirder, not to mention older, their own music sounded in comparison.

Still a trio, Souled American decelerated into the doleful splendor of the aptly titled *Frozen* (1994), which found them consigned to a small German label. "Got...some...worries / Got some...troubles," moans Grigoroff over a 14-second eternity of vibrations suspended in aspic. *Notes Campfire* sounds even more lost, with the withdrawn, slow-



Wayfaring strangers: from left, Joe Adducci and Chris Grigoroff.

motion spirit of Hank Williams on kettamine: "There's no love on my street / No wave from the corner / Man, it's all dark on my street / And I don't understand."

Others, fortunately, did. Two years ago novelist/guerrilla rock crit Camden Joy and several other writers (this one included) waxed flippy over SA in a series of bound posters titled "Make Me Laugh, Make Me Cry." Even better, the tUMULt label has just released the first four Souled American albums on a pair of double-CD sets, while *Frozen* and *Notes Campfire* have been recently reissued by Checkered and Catamount, respectively. The attrition continues: Tuma left the band last year. But word is that Grigoroff and Adducci are currently at work on their seventh album together, unsigned and slowly laying down the sounds of men growing older. ■

Address: the tUMULt label, P.O. Box 642271, San Francisco, CA 94164-2271, amulm@tuml.com, www.tuml.com; Checkered Part, 1456 N. Dayton, Suite 205, Chicago, IL 60622, www.checkeredpart.com; Catamount, P.O. Box 8368, Chicago, IL 60680



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"Grade: A. These days, pronouncing them merely transcendent will have to suffice."—Entertainment Weekly

"Wilco take a bite out of preconceived notions...a much fresher (although admittedly darker) pop sound."—Alternative Press

"Three and a half Stars. Wilco uses the studio like an instrument, unreeling mini-movies of the imagination. The sound may have changed, but the guiding force remains the same: communicating the mystery and wonder of the song."—Rolling Stone

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WHERE TO BUY



"THE BITCH" IS BACK"

PAGE 39: Tommy Hilfinger Collection jacket, shirt, and pants, from a selection, at Tommy Hilfinger Boutiques nationwide.

"HIT AND RUN"

PAGE 63: Diesel Style Lab Yennora T-shirt, \$45, at Diesel stores nationwide.

"ALTERED STATES"

PAGE 72: Katherine Hamnett bikini, top \$70, bottom \$85, at Saks Fifth Avenue.

\$12, at Triple 5 Soul, New York City; Transit, New York City; Urban Outfitters, New York City. CK Calvin Klein Jeans zip-off pants, \$78, at Bloomingdale's and Macy's nationwide. Adidas Stan Smith sneakers, \$54.99, for store information, call (800) 448-7096 or visit www.adidas.com.

"BACK TO THE LAB"

PAGE 94: Final Home nylon jacket, \$230, at MIC MAC, Washington, D.C.

New York City; Fred Segal Ron Herman, Los Angeles; At Edge on Sunset, Miami. Polo Jeans Company Ralph Lauren nylon pants, \$68, at Polo Jeans Company stores, Bloomingdale's, and Macy's nationwide. Triple 5 Soul shirt, \$68, camouflage backpack, \$68, and water bottle holder,

Maharishi pants, \$180, at Squid, New York City; Naked, Los Angeles. **PAGE 95:** Issey Miyake Men by Naoki Takizawa navy drip shirt, \$290, and pressed Etamine coat, \$1135, at Issey Miyake Boutique, New York City; BNY, Santa Monica, California.

"CHOICE CUTS"

PAGE 112: Y's for Men by Yohji Yamamoto wool V-neck sweater, \$515, at Alan Bilzerian, Boston; Susan, San Francisco. Emporio Armani drawstring pants, \$195, at Emporio Armani Boutiques nationwide; for store information, call (877) 7-EMPORIO.

PAGE 113: Stephen Sprouse velvet stretch top, \$297, at Barney's, New York City; Antique Boutique, New York City; Traffic, Los Angeles; Riccardi, Boston. Bruce jeans, \$160, at Linda Dresner, New York City; Kima Zabote, New York City; Louis Boston, Boston.

PAGE 114: Yohji Yamamoto pour Homme cotton-silk shirt, \$875, and leather sneakers, \$320, at Yohji Yamamoto, New York City; Alan Bilzerian, Boston; Susan,

San Francisco. ORFI pants, \$190, at Hotel of the Rising Star, New York City. **PAGE 115:** Comme des Garçons Homme Plus garment washed blouson, \$1,265, at Comme des Garçons, New York City; Ron Herman Fred Segal Melrose, Los Angeles; Saks, San Francisco.

PAGE 116: ORFI T-shirt, \$87.50, at Hotel of the Rising Star, New York City. Stone Island jacket liner, \$895; for store information call (212) 691-5100. Blue Marlin drawcord sweats, \$60, at Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom nationwide, or call (888) BLU-MRLN. Nike Air Force One sneakers, \$75; for store information, call (800) 352-NIKE.

PAGE 117: Alexander McQueen camouflage vest, from a selection; for store information call (212) 629-6100. Versace bracelet, from a selection, at Versace Boutiques nationwide.

WHERE TO BUY

THIS PAGE: Bruce denim top, from a selection, at Linda Dresner, New York City; Kima Zabote, New York City; Louis Boston, Boston.

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GENIUS LESSONS BY SEAN LANDERS

#38, "JANE" WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD I WENT ON A YMCA BICYCLE TRIP FROM MASSACHUSETTS TO VERMONT. THERE WERE FOUR GIRLS AND FOUR BOYS, AND TWO COUNSELORS IN THEIR EARLY TWENTIES, ONE MALE, ONE FEMALE. WE SLEPT IN YOUTH HOSTELS EACH NIGHT AND PLAYED SPIN THE BOTTLE. IT WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST TIMES OF MY LIFE, IF ALL THAT WASN'T ENOUGH, SOMETHING EVEN BETTER HAPPENED DURING THAT TRIP. IT WAS A HOT DAY, THE FEMALE COUNSELOR, WHO I'LL CALL JANE AND I WERE RIDING ALONG SIDE BY SIDE TALKING, AND THE REST OF THE GROUP WAS WAY AHEAD OF US. WE CAME UPON A STREAM AND COULD SEE THAT IT COLLECTED INTO A NATURAL POOL PERFECT FOR BATHING. SO SHE SAID, "LET'S GO FOR A SWIM", AND I THOUGHT SURE, WHY NOT. SO WE WALKED THROUGH THE FIELD DOWN TO THE POOL AND IN A FLASH, SHE TOOK ALL OF HER CLOTHING OFF AND WAS COMPLETELY NAKED. I WAS DUMBFOUNDED. SHE JUMPED IN AND TOLD ME TO DO THE SAME. SO I STRIPPED DOWN TO MY UNDERWEAR, AND WAS ABOUT TO LEAP IN WITH THEM ON BUT SHE TOLD ME TO TAKE THOSE OFF BECAUSE IT'D BE AWKWARD TO RIDE A BIKE WITH WET UNDERWEAR. SO I DID AND JUMPED IN. IT DIDN'T HAPPEN SUDDENLY BUT FIRST OUR FEET TOUCHED UNDERWATER AND THEN OUR HANDS MET AND SHE SLAM UP TO ME, KISSED ME ON THE CHEEK AND SAID "YOU'RE REALLY CUTE." THE NEXT THING I KNEW SHE WAS ALL OVER ME KISSING ME OPEN MOUTHED. I'LL NEVER FORGET THE INSTANT AND COMPLEX FEELINGS OF BEING UTTERLY TERRIFIED, COMPLETELY TURNED ON AND TOTALLY IN LOVE. WE ENDED UP IN THE GRASS HAVING THE MOST NATURAL, HIPPIEISH LOVE ENCOUNTER YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE. MY MIND WAS ABSOLUTELY BLOWN. OVER THE NEXT WEEK WE FINISHED THE TRIP TO VERMONT, AND SHE NEVER MENTIONED IT AGAIN. SHE EVEN PRETENDED IT NEVER HAPPENED. ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS I TRIED TO TALK ABOUT IT WITH HER AND SHE INSISTED SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT AND THREATENED TO CALL MY PARENTS IF I DIDN'T "SHUT OUT OF IT". I DROVE BEHIND HER FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK STARING AT HER BUTT ON HER BICYCLE SEAT AS WE ROAD DREAMING OF MARRYING HER AND MAKING LOVE AGAIN AND AGAIN. THE OTHER KIDS CAUGHT ON THAT I WAS IN LOVE WITH JANE AND BEGAN MAKING FUN OF ME BUT I DIDN'T CARE, I JUST KEPT STARING AT HER BUTT AND DREAMING. WHEN THE TRIP WAS OVER, I WENT HOME AND CRIED MY EYES OUT FOR WEEKS BECAUSE I WAS SO DESPERATELY IN LOVE WITH HER AND I KNEW I WOULD NEVER SEE HER AGAIN. ABOUT A MONTH WENT BY LIKE THIS AND THEN I LEARNED ON THE LOCAL NEWS THAT IF ANYONE HAD SLEPT WITH HER, THEY WERE ENTITLED TO A MILLION DOLLARS BECAUSE SHE WAS KIND OF LIKE THIS HUMAN LOTTERY PERSON. SO I CALLED UP THE TV STATION TO FIND OUT HOW TO COLLECT MY MILLION AND THEY TOLD ME THAT THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT. SO I TOOK A BUS TO SPRINGFIELD AND WENT TO THE TV STATION. WHEN I ARRIVED JANE WAS THERE. SHE HAD SOMEHOW SHRUNKEN TO THE SIZE OF A MOUSE, BUT SHE WAS STILL REALLY GOOD LOOKING, AND CLIMBED UP MY SWEATER AND HID IN MY HAIR. SHE BEGAN WHISPERING IN MY EAR, TELLING ME WHAT TO DO. HER FIRST ORDER WAS TO PUNCH THE PRODUCER RIGHT IN THE FACE, SO I DID IT. ALL OF A SUDDEN I GOT TACKLED FROM BEHIND AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I WAS BEING LOADED INTO A VAN. I WAS MAKING A HELL OF A COMMOTION TOO, TELLING THEM JANE HAD IN FACT SENT ME AND THIS WAS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING THAT COULD BE EASILY CLEARED UP IF THEY WOULD JUST ASK HER, BECAUSE SHE WAS THE SIZE OF A MOUSE SITTING ON MY SCALP. I WAS, AT THAT POINT, INTERCTED WITH SOMETHING THAT MADE ME VERY TIRED VERY FAST, AND FROM THEN ON I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS I TALKED WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE ABOUT JANE AND THE MILLION DOLLARS, BUT EVENTUALLY I DECIDED TO FORGET ABOUT IT. NOT TOO LONG AFTER THAT I GOT TO GO BACK HOME AGAIN AND WHEN I RETURNED TO SCHOOL I HAD A SLEW OF NEW NICK NAMES FROM MY FELLOW STUDENTS, "FREAK SHOW" BEING THE ONE THAT STUCK UNTIL I WENT TO COLLEGE. TODAY, WHEN I THINK ABOUT JANE, I FEEL REALLY SAD. MY DOCTOR SAYS THAT IF I START THINKING ABOUT JANE TOO MUCH, IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO CALL HIM AT HOME TO TALK ABOUT IT.





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